The Comprehensive Guide to Lucid Dreaming

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I. The Scale of Lucidity:

It is first important to note that dreaming and lucid dreaming are not categorical; they exist on a spectrum. In that note, here are the seven different attainable levels of lucidity:

1. Oblivious

Every human being dreams every night, but at this stage we are entirely unaware of dreaming. After waking up we are unaware that we dreamed. We pay no attention to it. This stage is accompanied by having no interest in dreams. It can also come from stress or exhaustion in daily life which leads to the night being used for regeneration during which awareness is mostly shut off.

2. Unaware

You realize that you dreamed but only after waking up. During sleep you are oblivious to your dreams-as-dreams. The dreams are usually muddled and unclear so that you derive no insight or benefit from them after awakening. If there were nightmares you feel like a victim of that nightmare rather than in a position to transform the energy.

3. Semi-Aware

Dreams are somewhat clearer and more vivid or memorable, especially after awakening. While dreaming you notice something strange is happening but you do not question it enough to become lucid. There are various hints that this is indeed a dream, but you never quite reach that point of realization. Instead you take the dream as something that is "really happening". You are fully unaware that there is another life in which you are in bed and sleeping.

4. Semi-Lucid

The dream is clear and vivid. At this stage you are usually aware enough to face a nightmare and transform it or make it better. Normal dreams are experienced with more interest and a kind of wakefulness, as if your sleeping-self is not entirely asleep. You notice the typical hints that show you that you are dreaming. Sometimes you question things or even notice that you are lucid, but you don't become fully lucid. Instead you shift between Unaware, Semi Aware and Semi Lucid. But these short glimpses of lucidity are enough to inspire you on the subject of Lucid Dreaming. They are short moments of realization that say "Wow...I am dreaming, aren't I?" and "Is this a dream?” Because the state is not stable these questions are sometimes quickly forgotten as you fall back into unawareness. This "falling back into unawareness" comes from a kind of tiredness or exhaustion with life. The less resistance you build up throughout the day, the easier it will be to maintain dream awareness. Sometimes the subconscious plays tricks on you at this level so that you go back to unawareness. For example you might experience a "false awakening" - that is dreaming that you have awoken and are no longer dreaming. Frequent instances of semi-lucidity will produce full lucidity.

5. Lucid

You notice the dream as a dream. You realize that there are two worlds and lives...one is the dreamscape and the other is what you consider your "real life" back lying in bed and sleeping. You realize that all of these events and dreamscapes are actually taking place "within you" and not "out there". The realization of lucidity parallels the spiritual self-realization of waking life where you realize that it’s "all happening within". For beginners the state of lucidity might be accompanied by a moment of awe or great happiness. Others report that they just acknowledge it matter-of-factly. Compared to higher levels, this state is fairly passive. That means you realize that you are dreaming but you don't do anything with this knowledge. Instead you enjoy the scenery passing by.

6. Highly Lucid

In this state the dream scenario appears even more intense and vivid, as if it were "more real" than your waking life (and in a sense it is). You are also aware that you can influence the dream, where to travel to, what to change or transform and what might be worthwhile. You are lucid enough to recognize this as an opportunity to change your energy-patterns which will also have an effect on waking life. You are aware of the meaning of various dream symbols and can receive direct communication from your soul / higher self. This level of lucid dreaming is highly enjoyable and fulfilling. At this stage you can use your dream for research, for creative exploration and for healing purposes.

7. Hyper Lucid

Your dream experience and perception (seeing, hearing, feeling, touching) become crystal clear. A sense of Elation, Bliss and Ecstasy course through you as the physical and spiritual Dimension overlap. This feeling of intense happiness usually spills over into waking life. At this stage you will find gates to other Dimensions and parallel lives. If you chose not to enter those gates you can also explore your life's purpose and the status of your mission. This state can be more exhilarating than anything you have ever experienced anywhere...in waking or dream life. That's why the Hyper-Lucid-Dreaming was created: So that every human being who would like to do so, can experience the state.

II. Introductory Lucid Dreaming Information

Over time you may use all and any of these techniques but not more than one a night. The basis of any of these exercises is Awareness.

1. You first become more interested in and aware of your dreams in general.

2. You then become more aware within your dreams.

That is to say that the more aware of your night-dreams you become, the more likely it is that you will soon become aware within your dreams and know that you are dreaming. For this purpose many lucid dreamers write a dream journal. In that journal they write down what they dreamed last night and intend to dream next night. This gives their practice some context. But it also increases dream memory and dream awareness. Normally, after waking up, you forget what you dreamed within only a few minutes. With most dreams, by the time you are in the shower or at breakfast you have completely forgotten that you even dreamed. Therefore, one of the best techniques you can use is to run through your entire dream again right after waking up. In the very minutes right after waking up, re-member the dream. With which thoughts did you wake up? What is the sequence of events you had during your night dreams? If you want to capture your dreams it is best done right after waking up. If you can install that habit into your morning routine, you increase your chances of becoming a lucid dreamer manifold. And you intensify the habit of re-running your dreams right after awakening if you add writing them down in a journal. This is difficult for many because it really requires some focus and patience...they type that says "Yes, I do take my dream world seriously". By whether someone is willing to do this or not you can tell whether they are really serious about becoming lucid dreamers or whether they are just fantasizing.

1.) How to Remember Your Dreams

Do you know how to remember your dreams?

Does it come naturally to you - or do you have to use specific techniques to boost your dream recall?

To lucid dream, it's very important that you can remember at least one vivid dream per night. This increases your self-awareness while dreaming, and most importantly, it means you can actually remember your lucid dreams... The following techniques will teach you how to remember your dreams more frequently, even if you are terrible at remembering dreams - or think you don't dream at all. Trust me, you do! The average person, sleeping for eight hours per night, will experience 100 minutes of REM dream time.

Make Time for REM Sleep

If you are continually sleep deprived, you can give up on lucid dreaming right now... For lucidity to occur, your brain should be relaxed and well-rested. What's more, you should have a good eight hours of sleep underway before you can enjoy long periods of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep in the morning when lucid dreams are more common.

The first dream of the night is the shortest, lasting just a few minutes and sandwiched between phases of deep sleep. You're unlikely to remember any of this dream. The second dream cycle occurs about 90 minutes later and is a little longer in length. But it's not until your fourth or fifth REM cycle (from around six hours onwards), that you experience long phases of dream sleep ranging 45-60 minutes.

So if you only sleep five or six hours per night, you are depriving yourself of those extra-long phases of REM sleep, which are important for processing memories and new information, as well as the therapeutic side of dreaming (such as coming to terms with emotional trauma). What's more, most of my lucid dreams occur from 6 am onwards, and the longest and most lucid dreams occur during lie-ins beyond 8 hours.

If your lifestyle doesn't cater to this from Monday to Friday, at least allow yourself a REM rebound on the weekends. Give yourself an extra two hours of sleep and that will be prime lucid dreaming time. If you can't afford to get up late, try going to bed earlier and schedule yourself at least 8-9 hours of sleep once a week.

Quick Fire Dream Journaling

Now that you are getting sufficient REM sleep, here is a much more active way to remember your dreams. It involves a dream journal.

Tonight, set your alarm clock to go off after you've had 4.5 hours of sleep. This should rouse you during a longer REM sleep phase, producing immediate dream recall. (Dream experts agree that we tend to only remember dreams when we awaken directly from the dream. If we go straight on into a deeper sleep, the dream is lost forever.)

Have a notebook by your bedside and when your alarm goes off, immediately write down all the details of the dream you were having. If nothing comes to mind, it's likely you weren't dreaming, so just relax and lay quietly for a few minutes and think about what you'd like to dream about next. When dream journaling, write in the present tense and underline unusual characters, symbols, scenes, plots, themes, or emotions. Then set your alarm to go off in 90 minutes' time and go back to sleep.

Repeat this trick every 90 minutes until you get up for the day. By morning, you should have written down four or five detailed dreams. This is an amazing technique that significantly boosts my dream recall and I strongly recommend it. Your efforts to wake up every 90 minutes will be rewarded with strong memories of vivid dreams - and of people, places and plots that you had no idea were running through your head.

Meditation and Self Hypnosis

When I first discovered lucid dreaming, self-hypnosis was the key to improving my dream recall and planting the subconscious intention to have lucid dreams.

Using meditation and self-hypnosis as you fall asleep at night are great ways to improve your dream recall and induce lucid dreams. All you need to do is fully relax and then command your subconscious mind to give you more vivid and memorable dreams.

Hypnosis is nothing spooky or mysterious, it's simply a relaxed state of mind in which you find yourself very suggestible. You can't get stuck in a hypnotic trance, and you can't scramble your brain while you're in there. Particularly with self-hypnosis, you are in control of every suggestion you place inside your highly suggestible mind.

Dream Supplements

Dream supplements and herbs are taken primarily to increase dream intensity - and one obvious side-effect of this is enhanced dream recall. Dream herbs like Calea Zacatechichi produce intensified dreams in which you have greater self-awareness. You will wake up in the morning with highly memorable dreams to report, and occasionally, lucid dreams too.

You can take such herbs from time to time to help produce intensely vivid dreams and test the full range and power of your dreaming mind. However, this is an optional extra and I wouldn't suggest that anyone *needs* to take such pills in order to become a better lucid dreamer. Experimenting with dream supplements is entirely up to you.

Drugs and Alcohol

Many prescription drugs as well as marijuana and alcohol alter your sleep cycles, having the effect of suppressing REM sleep and decreasing your dream time.

However, if you sleep for long enough, the effect of the drugs will wear off and you'll experience a *REM rebound*. Most people can relate to this after a night of heavy drinking; after a long deep sleep, you experience significantly longer REM phases giving way to intense dreams and even nightmares.

Final Thoughts

Understanding how to remember your dreams is absolutely essential if you want to learn lucid dreaming. Every lucid dreamer should keep a dream journal in which they record multiple dreams per week. It also helps to sketch some dream symbols and scenes when you feel the urge. (This needn't be fine art, just as long as it jogs your memory so you can then recall the dream scene in vivid detail later.)

It's only really since I began writing down my dreams that I can remember certain ones from years ago. If you don't write them down, they disappear in minutes or hours and then they are gone forever...

Your dream journal is also an ideal place to record your lucid dreams too. I clearly mark every lucid dream so I can flick through and quickly recall all my conscious dreams over the years. As a lucid dreamer, you are embarking on a fascinating inner journey - and that is definitely worth documenting.

I can't say I've had any memorable lucid dreams this way, so I don't recommend taking drugs or alcohol to increase dream recall or become lucid. It just doesn't work. In fact, drug abuse can really stall your lucid dream life.

2.) Keeping a Dream Journal

Keeping a **dream journal** is an important part of lucid dreaming. Fortunately, it's easy and fun - and ultimately improves your awareness of the dream state, making it easier to wake up in dreams.

The average person has five sleep cycles per night. At the end of each cycle, there is a period of REM sleep. Most people dream for 100 minutes each night. The closer it is to morning, the longer your REM sleep becomes.

So you are more likely to remember dreams as you wake up in the morning - the best time to write in your dream diary...

Find a Lucid Anchor

If you have trouble remembering dreams, you can use a lucid anchor. Anchoring comes from the fascinating branch of psychology called Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP). Just before you go to sleep, choose an object that you can see clearly from your bed. This is going to be your anchor.

My anchor is a picture of a big grizzly bear stuck on the wall. I look at this picture when I go to sleep, wake up during the night, and first thing in the morning. When I look at it I think "I will remember my dreams".

The phrase acts as a trigger for my subconscious brain to relate to. It reminds me to focus on my dreams and plants a subconscious intention: to associate the bear with remembering dreams. And I look at that bear multiple times each night.

How to Keep a Dream Journal

How to keep a dream journal may seem obvious. But there are a few things worth remembering. So here we go...

Step One

Find a notebook or journal specifically to record your dreams in. Keep it within arm's reach of the bed. Dreams fade quickly on awakening so you need to write them down as soon as you wake.

If you get up, walk around and start talking about other things, it will cause motor neurons to fire in your brain. This is what "overwrites" the memory of the dream. So be ready to jot down a few details first thing.

Step Two

Note down the date of your dream. Then write down everything you can remember. Write everything in the present tense (e.g. "I am walking down the street when a frog jumps out of the bushes"). This helps with remembering dreams by putting you in the moment.

Step Three

Identify dream themes. Think about the location, characters, sensations, sounds, objects and emotions of the dream. Underline key themes that may help with interpreting dreams (e.g., "the frog is sad because he knows a drought is coming").

You may want to analyze the themes and fully interpret your dream. Otherwise, continue to write down all the memorable details in your dream journal.

Anything that you can associate with established neural patterns is also important (e.g., you feel protective over a puppy). This may be a dream symbol or concept that represents a real life issue.

Step Four

Don't worry about spelling, punctuation and grammar. As long as you can read it back later and it still makes sense, you are fine.

Step Five

Sketch any strong images from the dream. It doesn't matter if you're not an artist. A sketch is just to help you visualize the dream later on.

Step Six

When you have finished, jot down any major life issues that are going on right now. For instance, you may be suffering from a broken heart. Over time, you will be able to link your subconscious dream symbols with real life issues.

Step Seven

Give the dream an appropriate title. Nothing flashy, just something to remember it by. If you became lucid at any point in the dream, write "L" for lucid in a circle by the title. Identify what caused you to become lucid (unless it was a WILD).

Dream Journal: FAQ

How often should I write in my dream journal?

Write down your dreams whenever you get the urge. It doesn't have to be every day - a few times a week is usually enough. (But obviously, the more you remember, the better.) Sometimes you won't feel bothered because real life just seems more important. A wise choice! In fact, I would be worried if you did put your dreams before real life.

How can I improve my awareness of dreams?

If you have difficulty remembering dreams, your journal may look a little bare. Don't worry. Start by writing down little snippets - anything at all - and watch your dream recall improve over time. Try listening to self-hypnosis recordings which remind you to remember your dreams. It may help to sleep in for an extra half hour on weekends. Just before you wake up, you are flirting on the border of consciousness and REM sleep. This is the best time for remembering dreams... and having lucid dreams!

How can dream themes help me become lucid?

Finding common themes and symbols will also help you create lucid dream triggers. Over time, see if you can find any recurring themes, such as running away from something. Remind yourself to become lucid every time this happens. The next time you are running away from something in a dream, you may be pleasantly surprised by a conscious realization!

3.) Reality Checks: The Gateway to Lucid Dreams

Reality checks are a popular way to trigger lucid dreams. They may not be 100% reliable, but they are very easy and habit forming.

If you are practicing other lucidity techniques, perform daily reality checks as well for good measure. They will help with "lucid living" (building greater self-awareness while awake) which leads to more vivid and lucid dreams.

What Are Reality Checks?

To learn lucid dreaming, you must be able to **spot the difference between a dream and waking reality**.
Normally when you dream, you accept it as real life. It's only when you wake up that you realize something was strange. By integrating reality checks into your waking life, you will soon do them in your dreams. This will snap your conscious mind to realizing: 'Hey - I'm dreaming!"

What Makes a Good Reality Check?

So, what makes a really good reality check that works in the surreal, illogical nature of the dream world? Let's think this through for a moment.

How do you know that you are awake right now? You might say:

- Because I can see
- Because I can feel
- Because I am aware
- Because I just am!

Unfortunately, this all applies to the dream world too. That's why seeing, feeling, awareness and knowledge of your existence do not help you become lucid. (Remember that your dreaming mind lacks clarity of thought and can't draw the same logical conclusions as your waking mind.)

In order to recognize when you're dreaming, you need to spark that "Eureka!" moment with a definitive test: **a simple question** combined with a **pre-determined action** that you already know is impossible in the waking world.

How to Do a Reality Check and Become Lucid

My default reality check is pushing two fingers from my right hand into the palm of my left hand and willing them to pass straight through. In waking life, this is discreet and always yields the same resistance. In a dream, my willing the fingers to pass through causes it to happen 90% of the time.

And then I know... I'm dreaming!

(At this realization your conscious brain will ignite in the dream, your environment will surge into focus and you will have a real sense of who you are, where you are, and what you want to do next.

Of course, the action is not enough. You need to ask the question "Am I dreaming?" and truly mean it. You need to look around your environment every time you do a reality check, and consider "Is this real?"

I like to question the solidity of my surroundings. For instance, I might look at a cup on my desk and wonder does that really exist or am I imagining it? Does it go away when I stop looking at it? How about the air - can I see the air? Is it warm, cold, dense, sparse, colorful, and invisible? This is how you build self-awareness: questioning your own feelings and perceptions in the moment.

At the same time, you'll perform your reality check of pushing your fingers into your palm. Do this a dozen times a day (leave notes to remind yourself) and allow each check to take anything from a few seconds to few minutes. Be sure to come to a well-informed decision each time. Don't just ask the question and forget about it. Truly mean what you say, and reach a conclusion.

Soon you will habitually ask this question in a dream. Bingo. Your mind will be jogged into critical thinking mode and you'll conclude that you're dreaming.

Top 10 Reality Checks for Lucid Dreams

Use the finger check if you like, or try out these other effective tests:

1. **Breathe** - Can you hold your nose and mouth shut and breathe?
2. **Jump** - When you jump, do you float back down?
3. **Read** - Can you read a sentence twice without it changing?
4. **Look** - Is your vision clearer or blurrier than normal?
5. **Hand** - Can you push hand through a solid surface?
6. **Time** - Can you read a clock face or digital watch?
7. **Fly** - Can you will yourself to fly or hover above the ground?
8. **Palms** - Do the palms of your hands look normal close-up?
9. **Mirrors** - Does your reflection look normal in the mirror?
10. **Math** - Can you add up two numbers for a correct answer?

For good measure, perform two reality checks each time. If the first one doesn't work (it happens) you have a failsafe. I combine fingers with the palm check.

Sometimes I try to push my hand through the desk or wall. It is a wonderful feeling when you actually can push your hand through a solid object in a lucid dream. Your lucidity makes this feel *real* - and, naturally, very weird!

We often lose ourselves in a dream as we would lose ourselves in a good book or movie. Since we are also participating in the dream it is easy to forget that we are dreaming. When attention is immersed you are dreaming, when it is detached or aware of other things than the focal point, you are more lucid.

Why Build Self-Awareness?

The human brain creates neural constructs based experiential learning: patterns of thinking based on our real life experiences. For instance, since you have had the experience of gravity your whole life, you don't need to repeatedly question it. You simply know that you can't will yourself to float or take off.

And so most adults mosey on through life without ever questioning the world around us. We know that the sky is blue, that we can't control objects with our minds, and that walls are too solid to walk through. We become so accustomed to our reality we forget to question it. And this applies in the dream world too.

However, if you do decide to question your reality on a regular basis, it increases your level of self-awareness in the real world. It pulls your consciousness into the moment. And when this becomes second nature in waking like, it will become second nature in dreams too.

And this is a direct line to tapping lucid dreams.

Attaining a good level of self-awareness will not come overnight. But it's a fast learning curve. A beginner's progress could well be exponential.

So, pay attention to your surroundings. Study them in detail. And most importantly, question their nature. Do your hands belong to you? How would it look if you had 12 fingers? Can imagine them melting into the furniture?

Have fun with visualizations and tricks of the mind. You're aiming to short circuit your brain and edit programming that has been in place for decades...

Troubleshooting Reality Checks

As this is a very popular lucid dreaming technique, I get a lot of questions about how to do reality checks (and why they don't always work). I've summarized the most common questions and answers below:

How can I remember to do more reality checks each day?
Set up triggers that remind you to perform a reality check, such as: a note on your computer screen, telephone, and bathroom tap, schoolbooks, or even write an L for lucid on that back of your hand.

You can also mentally set up trigger points that relate to your day. Do a reality check every time you: walk up or down stairs, hear your digital watch beep, receive a text message, unlock a door, hang up the phone, and so on.

I've been doing reality checks all week but haven't had any lucid dreams. What am I doing wrong?
First, ensure you're doing your checks mindfully and coming to a reason-based conclusion every time. Every check should hold real personal perspective.

Second, make sure you're keeping a dream journal and recording at least one dream per night. You may well have performed a reality check in a dream (and even become lucid) but just didn't remember it!

Third, combine reality checks with other lucid dreaming techniques, such as meditation and dream incubation. They work well in combination.

Fourth, be patient. You are entraining a new habit into your daily life and it may take days or weeks for it to filter through to your dream life. Rest assured, like most of our daily habits, you will dream about it eventually.

I did a reality check in a dream but it didn't work, I just kept on dreaming. Why did this happen?
The most likely explanation is that you're not performing your waking reality checks with enough mindfulness. When you attempt the impossible action, make sure you're *really* trying to do it and not just kidding yourself. And when you ask the question - "Am I dreaming?" - be sure to truly ponder that concept. Imagine what a dream feels like, what you would do if you were dreaming right now, and then snap yourself back into reality to compare the feeling.

Occasionally a reality check fails through no fault of your own. You may simply be having a vivid dream that is all too normal to accept as a dream. It's a weird mind space, and particularly common in false awakenings (which is why you should always do a reality check every time you wake up).

The best solution is to perform a second reality checks as a failsafe. If you still can't validate your dream-state, but have some basic level of dream control, then simply explore the dream until it gives itself away. Something irregular will eventually pop up if you keep pulling at the thread. Full lucidity will ensue.

III. Dream-Inducing Techniques

1.) Cycle Adjustment Technique (C.A.T.)

The **Cycle Adjustment Technique**, or CAT, is a simple way to learn how to lucid dream by naturally influencing your body's chemistry. It requires adjusting your sleep cycles to raise your conscious awareness during the early morning REM sleep phases.

When used correctly, it aims to generate up to four lucid dreams in a week. And it can be highly effective for beginners: in an experiment involving 10 students, the CAT technique taught 8 of them how to lucid dream in the first two weeks, reporting an average of two lucid dreams during the trial.

The CAT lucid dream exercise was created by Daniel Love, an expert lucid dreamer from the UK. He has written an in-depth book about lucid dreaming, called “Are You Dreaming?” with many more lucidity techniques described in detail.

BASIC STEPS

STEP #1

Set your alarm clock to 90 minutes before your normal wake-up time. Do this every day for one week to reset your body clock. As a result, CAT will not give you any lucid dreams in the first week.

STEP #2

From day 8, alternate your wake-up time by 90 minutes on a daily basis. Normal, early, normal, early, and so on.

When you go to bed, set the intention to awake at the earlier time and do lots of reality checks. Even if you know you are waking up at the later time, mentally prepare for an early start.

HOW IT WORKS

On normal days, your body will expect you to get up early. So your mind will become stimulated and more likely to become conscious while you are still dreaming. This dramatically improves your chances of having many lucid dreams in a week - hopefully every other day or 4 times per week. As you can see, the Cycle Adjustment Technique is a pretty simple way to learn how to lucid dream. There are no memory cues, visualizations or other mental tricks to rehearse. The hardest part is getting up early and being strict about it! You must stick to the schedule or you are unlikely to trigger the chemical response in your body which is what will help you have lucid dreams.

Cycle Adjustment Technique: FAQ

What time should I go to bed while practicing CAT?

Go to bed at the same time every night. This is all about programming your body clock, which in turn adjusts its own timer for releasing certain chemicals throughout the day. The more rigid you are about going to bed and waking up at the set times, the more likely it is to induce lucid dreams.

What should I do when I wake up early?

Do whatever you like - but don't go back to bed! You should also perform reality checks during the next 90 minutes as often as possible. Then go about your day as normal. Doing more reality checks during the day will aid spontaneous lucidity.

What if I wake up early on a normal day?

If you naturally wake up early when you should be sleeping in, just lie still and remind yourself to do lots of reality checks the next time you are dreaming.

Can I ever sleep in late?

Yes, but only on a "normal" waking day. Just try to keep it to a minimum so that you don't mess up your newly optimized sleep cycle.

How long should I practice the Cycle Adjustment Technique?

If CAT generates regular lucid dreams, you can keep using this dream exercise for as long as you like. Daniel Love recommends that you repeat step one (waking up 90 minutes early each day for a week) to refresh the cycle every few months.

Try the Cycle Adjustment Technique for yourself. Beginners may learn how to lucid dream in just a couple of weeks with this very simple dream exercise...

2.) Wake Back To Bed (W.B.T.B.)

Wake Back to Bed, or the WBTB method, is a variation on the Cycle Adjustment Technique with one key difference: the results are immediate. You can use this method every day of the week, or just on weekends - it's up to you. The more you practice this lucid dreaming technique, the more lucid dreams you can have.

This method is a great way for beginners to learn how to have lucid dreams. Many report multiple conscious dreams using the WBTB method, with some lasting over an hour. So if you want to control your dreams but don't give this method a go... you would have to be crazy ;)

The Wake Back To Bed Method

STEP ONE - Go to bed as normal and allow yourself to sleep for six hours. Set your alarm clock or have another early riser wake you up.

STEP TWO - After six hours, get out of bed and fully wake yourself up. Find something to occupy your brain to make you alert. Read about lucid dreaming if you want to stay focused on the subject. Stay alert for 20-60 minutes. (Hint: you *must* get out of bed!)

STEP THREE - Go back to bed and relax. If your mind is too alert, practice meditation, listen to brainwave entrainment and/or perform Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams. Use your visualization skills to place your mind back in the dreamscape and plan your next lucid dream as you fall asleep.

How the WBTB Method Works

Wake Back to Bed is an easy way to learn how to have lucid dreams that really works. But why?

First, it works because you stimulate your conscious brain at a time you would normally be experiencing REM sleep. This leads to consciousness in dreams. Second, when you do return to sleep, you will dive straight into REM sleep from a conscious state, also inducing multiple dreams one after another.

Put the two together and you have a far greater chance of becoming lucid. I have tried the Wake Back to Bed technique with consistent results.

In fact, I do it inadvertently most days. I get up early to let our puppy out to pee, and the act of getting up and moving around really wakes me up. When I return to bed I practice the MILD technique. This causes me to spend the next two hours phasing in and out of vivid dreams and quite easily leads to lucidity.

Remember though, the longer you stay up, the more your conscious brain will surface. So the first time you try this, stay up for at least 20-60 minutes.

An Easy Lucid Dreaming Technique

If you really want to learn how to have lucid dreams, the WBTB method isn't much hardship. It can work even if you don't perform any visualizations or mediation (although this will increase your chances of lucidity).

Note that if you normally only sleep for six hours, reduce your sleep time even more (say, to four hours). The idea is to temporarily delay your regular REM sleep. When you fall asleep again, you will dive straight into REM sleep, an essential part of a normal sleep cycle.

So practice Wake Back To Bed whenever you get the chance - especially if you don't have any time pressures at weekends - and learn how to have lucid dreams in as little as a few days.

3.) Dream-Exit Induced Lucid Dreaming (D.E.I.L.D.)

How to Have a D.E.I.L.D

If you're a light sleeper (you wake up at various times during the night) then DEILDs may come very naturally to you. If you're a heavy sleeper, you might need the aid of an alarm clock or lucid dreaming app which is designed to momentarily wake you from REM sleep...

1. A Momentary Waking

The ideal conditions for a Dream Exit Induced Lucid Dream occur after 4-6 hours of sleep, when your REM cycles are starting to become longer. You must briefly wake up from a dream in order to implement the DEILD technique. If you find this happens naturally - great. If not, use an alarm as mentioned above. The alarm should be disruptive enough to rouse you from the dream state, but not enough to wake you fully. It should also *shut itself off* as soon as you are partially woken.

2. Stay Still and Visualize

As your mind straddles the border between a dream and wakefulness, keep your body absolutely still. Any movement now will trigger the firing of motor neurons in your brain and transfer your full consciousness to the waking world. Any sense of sleep paralysis will also completely wear off. (This is why you don't want to have to move in order to shut off your alarm.)

With your body unmoving, keep your eyes closed (or immediately close them) and recall the dream you were just in. Place yourself back in the exact same moment you were in before you woke up. Sometimes this happens automatically and the DEILD becomes effortless. If not, try to mentally recapture that dream in as much detail as possible. Recall the sights, sounds, emotions and tactile sensations of the dream.

3. Dream Re-Entry

This part is automatic. If you performed the last two steps accurately enough, your brain will re-create the dream and send your awareness back in - only this time, you'll be fully lucid. Like Wake Induced Lucid Dreams, DEILDs are highly vivid because you enter the dream with a heightened sense of awareness carried over from the waking state. Once you "sink" or "pop" into the dream, remind yourself that you're dreaming and perform a reality check for good measure.

The time between waking up and re-entering your dream lucidly can be as little as a few seconds. If you find you are lying in bed for several minutes, then the moment is almost certainly gone. But don't worry - you can still have a lucid dream at this point by having a Wake-Induced Lucid Dream. You're already in an ideal state of mind and body to have a WILD so make the most of the opportunity - just drift and start to visualize a whole new dream scene.

4.) Wake-Induced Lucid Dreaming (W.I.L.D.)

The **Wake Induced Lucid Dream** (aka WILD) is the most powerful lucid dreaming technique known to man for two reasons. First, it enables you to have a conscious dream at the time you choose. Second, it produces the most vivid kind of lucid dream because there is no lapse in consciousness.

Also referred to as the Mind Awake / Body Asleep technique, it enables you to enter a lucid dream directly from a waking state. This is method if often used by out-of-body explorers and, depending on subtle differences in induction, can either lead to lucid dreams or Out of Body Experiences.

The modern WILD technique stems from practices used in Tibetan Buddhism for thousands of years - an art form they call Dream Yoga. In Buddhism this is one pathway to enlightenment. However, irrespective of your religious views, you can use this WILD technique to have fantastic guided dreams. It is a natural, instinctive method of entering the dream body and many children have figured out this technique on their own, as a simple way to falling asleep and entering their chosen dream world.

I have broken the WILD tutorial down into four parts:

1. Physical & Mental Relaxation
2. Hypnagogic State
3. Creating a Dream Scene
4. Entering The Lucid Dream

The best time to initiate a WILD is after 4-5 hours of deep sleep, when your body is deeply relaxed, your REM cycles at their longest, and your dreams the most vivid. If you are a deep sleeper, set your alarm about 2-3 hours earlier than usual. If you are a light sleeper, simply practice this method when you naturally wake up in the night. Alternatively, you can practice if you are tired and taking an afternoon nap, when your brain will immediately catch up on lost REM sleep.

1. Physical & Mental Relaxation

Think about how you fall asleep every night. We're going to replicate that process with one tiny difference: as your body falls asleep, your mind will stay awake. That may sound like an alien concept to you now, but rest assured it is entirely possible (and becomes easier with practice).

To begin, your body should already be very relaxed and loose. Lie on your back, or whatever position you can lie in for a while without moving. Empty your mind and gaze into the blackness of your closed eyelids. If any thoughts pop up, just observe them - don't interact - then send them on their way.

2. Hypnagogic State

Now lead your mind into the sleepy, half-dream hypnagogic state. Sometimes you'll wake up in the night and already be in this dreamy state - your body soft and relaxed and your mind drifting back into the dream world without any effort at all. When you catch that cloud - float on it!

(If you are attempting a WILD "from cold" you will need to relax into it, both physically and mentally, with *at least* 10 minutes of meditation. Soon, the hypnagogia will come.)

Once in the hypnagogic state, you'll see patterns and colors that take over your vision in the darkness. Observe the hypnagogia and go deeper, allowing it to hypnotize you and draw your awareness away from the outside world. The internal dream world will start to evolve now.

Remember to let your body stay soft and sink into the bed, keeping absolutely still and imagining numbness taking over. If you have an itch, scratch it and start over, but otherwise try to stay completely still and relaxed. Silence your inner

monologue if it starts to chime in. You may hear hypnagogic sounds - echoes of voices and other sounds in your head. Just relax and enjoy the experience.

3. Creating a Dream Scene

At this point you need to make a judgment call. If you don't feel sufficiently relaxed or ready to drop off to sleep, then stay with your hypnagogia for longer. However, if you feel the dream-state coming on and feel quite detached from the real world, then you're ready to start the launch sequence for your lucid dream. Making the right judgment makes all the difference between an easy, successful WILD and numerous fruitless attempts. But don't worry, once you know the signals (or absence of signals) that precede a WILD, you'll find it easier to recognize every time. Practice makes perfect.

Now, there are two ways to create a dream from here: visualization or OBE exit.

a. *The Visualization Method*

Do you have a vivid imagination? If so, begin to visualize a vivid dream scene with as much close-up detail as possible. Explore your surroundings in a calm, peaceful manner and send your visual awareness into the landscape as clearly as possible.

If you are a musician, then you may have a better auditory sense, so instead of visualizing, use your imagination to create the sounds of your dream. Listen to everything and make the sounds and voices realistic. Likewise, if you are good at sports or working with your body, induce a movement sensation such as walking, running or riding a bicycle. Use your strongest sense to fully engage your mind in the desired dream. It may feel like a form of vivid day dreaming but that will soon change...

Keep reminding yourself "I'm dreaming" (even if you're not there yet - you soon will be, and this will be a helpful reminder to stay lucid and not lapse into a non-lucid dream).

With your mind absorbed the half-dream state, allow your body to fall asleep altogether: lose all awareness of it and place your mind fully into your new dream body. You should sense that you are no longer lying in bed - but now walking in your dream! When you feel it "pop" into place, your sleeping body is but a distant memory. The feeling is unmistakable - you are now lucid dreaming!

b. The OBE Exit

Sometimes you may be so swept up in your hypnagogic meditation that your body falls asleep before you have the chance to create a dream scene. Your awareness has nowhere to go but your own bedroom, except now you are dreaming. It is a dream bedroom, and you are lying in bed in your dream.

The lack of transition is why so many people believe this is an Out of Body Experience. It literally feels like you are still awake, lying in bed, with the ability to float out of your body.

Here are some clues to help you recognize the subtle transition from waking to dreaming (bear in mind these do not happen to everyone, and the transition may be virtually seamless):

- You may hold on to an awareness of your sleeping body, which is now under REM atonia (sleep paralysis). You may feel like your limbs are going numb, or a lead blanket is moving up your body. Don't fight it. Instead, relax and embrace it because this is the start of your lucid dream!
- You may also experience vibrations, or a very loud buzzing sound. It feels like electricity, or a fast vibrating in your head, and you may even wonder if your head is going to explode. But it doesn't actually hurt or feel bad; it's just a very noisy distraction that simply means you are on the brink of conscious dreaming.
- If you become fearful or convince yourself you are having a genuine Out of Body Experience, then you may well accidentally invite other beings into your dream scenario. They can be menacing, or they can be warm

and positive. It really depends on your own projected thoughts and beliefs about the experience. Just remember, if they do appear, *you are dreaming* and you remain in control of all your feelings (and the other dream characters' actions by proxy).

At this point you can embrace the dream and leave your body. The room will look incredibly lifelike, whether it is your usual bedroom or a temporary sleeping environment like a hotel room. The imagery is triggered by your waking memories and the fact that this is the last place you went to sleep.

This can be confusing to say the least. You may feel like you've just opened your eyes and woken up - so be sure to perform a reality check at this point. Otherwise you may just roll over and go to sleep properly and your lucid dream will be wasted.

4. Entering the Lucid Dream

The final step is to fully submerge your awareness into the lucid dream - and stabilize the dream to prevent yourself from waking up. If you used the visualization method, keep exploring your dream scene with all your senses. Say to yourself "I'm dreaming" and do a reality check. You will know you're dreaming because the whole scene will be 3D and feel like a world of its own. Like regular dreams, you will have little or no awareness or your physical body, your bed, or the real world.

If you used the OBE exit method, you will need to free your dream body from the distant sense of your physical body which is also lying in bed. This is one of the quirks of OBEs. It's probably caused by the confusion of the conscious brain switching from waking reality to the lucid dream world, while the perceived surroundings remain unchanged.

You may be able to climb out of bed normally - however if the sensation of sleep paralysis is still with you, it will be hard (even impossible) to move your limbs. In this case, try sinking or floating out of your body. Imagine how it feels when you're swinging really high on a swing in the park; that kinetic sensation can free you from your body.

Alternatively, relax and visualize a new dream scene. Use your most powerful sense and engage yourself in the picture. It should be easier to create a dream from here and "teleport" instantly. Or, if you find you have company in your bedroom, you can ask the dream figures for help getting out!

5. Troubleshooting Wake Induced Lucid Dreams

Learning to WILD usually takes time and considerable awareness of the optimum state. However, once you're in the Mind Awake / Body Asleep state the actual dream creation is deceptively easy. Stick with it, and make it a night-time meditation habit. Even a failed WILD attempt is good meditation practice.

The most common problems I hear are opposite extremes: either people find they can't relax enough, or they can't stay awake long enough to enter the dream-state.

- **Relaxing your mind and body is essential.** It's just like falling asleep every night - you won't get to sleep tossing and turning, or if your head is full of internal dialogue. To access the relaxed state, begin your guided meditation or listen to brainwave entrainment (this is truly helpful and I have been using it for years in my meditation, lucid dreams and OBEs). This state will help you to consciously relax and prime your mind and body for a lucid dream.

- **Hold on to a passive state of conscious awareness.** It takes practice and mental conditioning to stay conscious while your body falls asleep - but it is not as hard as you may think. Practice WILDs when you are relaxed but not completely exhausted. Stay true to the process of visualization and your goal of having a lucid dream. A complete WILD routine need only take a few minutes from start to finish and when used in dream re-entry, can happen in seconds. If you can remain focused for those important seconds or minutes you will succeed.

5.) Mnemonic-Induced Lucid Dreaming (M.I.L.D.)

In essence, the MILD technique will train you to increase your self-awareness, making it easier to recognize when you are dreaming. It also involves incubating a lucid dream with affirmations and programming your next dream to contain pre-determined dream triggers to prompt lucidity.

As you may already be aware, a mnemonic is any learning technique that aids memory. In this instance, you are planting a cue in your subconscious mind which helps you remember your intention to lucid dream and recognize when you're dreaming.

The following Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams tutorial is aimed at beginners - there are no special requirements or skills needed. It's sectioned in four parts:

1. Dream Recall
2. Reality Checks
3. Lucid Affirmations
4. Visualize Your Dream

How to Have a Mnemonically Induced Lucid Dream

You can perform the first two steps of the MILD technique right now. The latter steps are for just before you go to sleep tonight. It involves meditation and visualization so it works best when you are physically and mentally relaxed and ready for sleep.

Step #1 - Dream Recall

It is especially important that you already have a decent dream recall rate - this means being able to remember and write down at least one dream every morning.

If you can't remember your dreams, then they are probably not very vivid, and so the likelihood of you becoming lucid within them is poor. What's more, if you do spontaneously have a lucid dream, you will not even be able to remember it!

Step #2 – Reality Testing

Reality-testing is questioning whether you are waking or dreaming throughout your waking life and frequently and especially when odd or out-of-place things occur. "Am I dreaming?" "Is this a dream?" "Is this real?" The idea of this technique is that if you get used to reality-testing you will do the same during your night dream, thus increasing the likelihood of becoming aware of the dream-reality you're in, making you lucid. Reality-testing can be supported by hanging up little reminders or cards throughout your living space, in your car or the office. Such reminders do not only increase your lucidity at night but also remind you that our daily life can be hypnotic and on-automatic and that we can "snap out of it" for more wakefulness and self-determination in everyday life. While you are reading this, imagine for a moment, you would find out that everything you deem real and "my life" is just a dream. Imagine you just had this realization. Nothing you currently see in your surroundings or living space is ultimate reality but just a dream that a more real and expanded self is having. And it can all dissolve within seconds. Your real self is not in this scenario but only dreaming this scenario. Your real self, is "elsewhere" or more precisely, you are a small part contained within your real self. That real self is waiting for your return from this dream world you think is real. Try to get this sense of life being a dream for a few minutes. Try to feel the sense of wonderment or relief or whatever you would feel if it were all just a wisp of air. Your dream-self thinks it is real, until you question it. To intensify reality-testing especially notice everyday-life situations that seem odd or unusual. One way to intensify the reality-testing technique is to write down ten occasions at which to reality-test you throughout the day and to continue this exercise on a daily basis until

you remember all ten. So you'd write 1. When I am showering, 2. When stopping at the gas-station, 3. When someone greets me, etc. Then you try to reality-test yourself when it happens. So you are at the gas-station and remember your intention and ask: "Am I waking or dreaming?" If you forget to reality-test at any of the stations throughout the day, you have to repeat the whole exercise the next day. And so you keep repeating until you have remembered all ten and perfected your reality-testing recall. The idea behind this technique is that the habit rubs off on your dream-self.

Step #3 - Lucid Affirmations

When you are lying in bed tonight, go through some lucid affirmations in your mind. This is really where the term Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams comes from - you are programming commands into your memory, to be recalled later on in your dreams.

Repeat one or many of the following affirmations in your mind:

- Next time I'm dreaming, I will remember I'm dreaming
- The next scene will be a dream
- I will have a lucid dream tonight
- I'm dreaming now

Put real feeling into the words as you chant them in your mind. If you feel your mind start to wander, draw it back to the issue at hand. Stay focused. Repeat the affirmations until you feel like you are about to fall asleep (how long this takes depends on you personally; it may be 2 minutes or 10 minutes). Then proceed to the final step.

Step #4 - Visualize Your Dream

Now we can begin the visualizations, but only perform this step once you are deeply relaxed and feel you could drop off to sleep quite easily.

Imagine you are back in a recent dream - but this time you are going to re-live the ending differently. Visualize the scene in as much clarity and detail as you can remember, then look for a dream sign. This is some unusual character, location or object which reveals the dream to be mere fantasy; something you wouldn't see in real life. Then say to yourself "I'm dreaming!"

Although you are just day dreaming (and this is by no means a lucid dream) continue to experience an imagined lucid dream fantasy. Do whatever you would do if this were a real lucid dream. You might decide to fly and explore the landscape, or seek out a dream character.

During this process, you will likely fall asleep. That's ok. The primary purpose of Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams is to have your very last thought before you go to sleep be about lucid dreaming. Mission accomplished! Later the same night (or in the morning) you have a much higher chance of becoming spontaneously lucid.

Occasionally, something amazing will happen. Your imaginary dream world will suddenly merge into a real lucid dream. Your body has fallen asleep but your mind - so captivated by the imagined dreamscape - remained conscious. You'll pop into the landscape and experience the dream with full intensity. When this happens, your MILD attempt has become a WILD (Wake Induced Lucid Dream). Result!

Tips on Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams

During the 1970s, when Dr. Stephen LaBerge was developing the MILD technique, he found that certain interruptions in regular sleep patterns improved success rates. These included waking up to have sex, vomit or meditate. This led him to conclude that: **wakefulness, interjected during sleep, increases your chances of becoming lucid**.

So, in order to have more lucid dreams with MILD, you may want to wake yourself up in the night and bring yourself to full consciousness for a few minutes. No need to induce vomiting! Simply spending 20 minutes reading about lucid dreaming works fine. As you return to sleep, perform the MILD technique.

Another way to exploit this principle is to practice MILD during afternoon naps. I find this most effective if I am a little sleep deprived from the night before, so it's easy to fall asleep during the afternoon. However I don't advocate forced sleep deprivation; simply make use of this principle if you happen to be particularly sleepy in the day.

IV. Improving your Lucid Dream Skills & Personal Dreamscape

1.) How to Stay Lucid in Dreams and Increase Dream Intensity

First lucid dreams are very short - we're talking seconds. You might be dreaming and run around telling everyone about it. This is a common pattern for newbie lucid dreamers. You absolutely have to keep a cool head, or you'll just wake up.

So next time you become lucid, immediately perform these simple dream stabilizing techniques to increase your self-awareness in an instant. This will enhance the conscious clarity of the dream, making it easier for you to recall your lucid dream intention and explore your new surroundings.

How to Prolong Lucid Dreams

1. Stay calm - Don't run around or shout "I'm dreaming!" if you can help it. It's better to get a grip and relax back into the dream.

2. Rubs your hands together - Movement appears to engage the conscious brain and prevent it from changing to a waking state.

3. Look at your hands - Focus on your hands close-up to help you notice the finer details which aren't normally present in a dream.

4. Demand "clarity now" - Say it out loud and your dream scene will instantly snap into focus, as per your conscious instruction.

5. Do some mathematics - Do a simple arithmetic sum in your head, such as 4 + 4, which engages the logical part of your brain.

If you notice the dream is slipping away (losing color and detail):

6. Spin around - Spinning can help stabilize your awareness of the dream, although it can also make the dream scene go black. Save this for when you have more experience and control of the dream state.

7. Fall backwards - Again, this relies on the principle that movement helps increase self-awareness within the dream.

2.) How to Control Your Dreams

Learning exactly **how to control your dreams** is a crucial part of lucid dreaming. It is not enough to merely recognize when you are dreaming - you must learn the laws of the dream world! *This is the really fun part...*

You can learn how to do anything in your virtual reality dream world by using certain techniques and playing with what works best for you. So, without further delay, let's look at some of the most popular lucid dream themes.

How to Have Flying Dreams

When they first learn how to lucid dream, most people go flying. It's a very common desire and I'm sure every lucid dreamer has done it at some point.

However, flying dreams are not always easy to control. It's not normal to fly in real life so when you try to have flying dreams, the conscious brain can have trouble believing it.

You might find you can only get so high - or you convince yourself you will fall. This is not a physical problem, but a mental one.

Think of the movie *The Matrix*, when Morpheus asks Neo how he beat him in a virtual reality fight. Was it because he was stronger, faster, or fitter in the simulated world? No. It was because he truly *believed* he was better. It's the same concept in lucid dreams!

To nurture this belief and have wonderful flying dreams, start by hopping or bouncing along the dreamscape, gradually allowing yourself to get higher. Remember that it's a dream and you can't get hurt. With practice, you will soon be soaring above the clouds and flying over cities like Superman!

If you want, you can use a flying aid. This can be anything from a jet pack to giant wings, or even sitting on the back of a dragon!

How to Change the Scenery

Making a dream scene morph in front of your eyes can be difficult - mainly because you don't *expect* it to happen.

Of course, when it comes to knowing how to control your dreams, there is always another way. Lucid dream research has revealed various ways to change the scenery in conscious dreams.

Once, I wanted to eat while lucid but I was in the middle of a field. So I applied some lucid dream logic. I imagined a restaurant standing behind me, and when I turned around a second later, there it was. I went in and ordered a delicious meal for free!

Sometimes, I find a dream door (a door which stands randomly in the middle of the dreamscape) and step through it. Visualize your destination on the other side, or let the dream take you wherever it wants to. You can also try this trick with mirrors, as they often lead to other places in dreams, acting as portals to **alternate realities**.

The most important thing is to truly *believe* that the scenery will change. Otherwise you could end up in a battle of logic with your conscious brain. Make it a habit to say to yourself "this is a dream" every now and then so you don't lose lucidity, and you will soon learn that anything is possible.

How to Travel Through Time

This is a really easy way to learn how to control your dreams and time travel. Fly up above the clouds so you can no longer see the ground below. Visualize the time and place you want to arrive at, then descend back through the cloud cover. Instant time travel!

Or, step into your own personal time machine. Press all the buttons and tweak all the levers you need to convince yourself you are traveling through time, then step outside again.

Both of these methods also work for changing the scenery and moving to a different point in space - whether you want to travel to a new country, a new planet, or a new universe.

How to Find Dream Objects

Dream research has found dozens of ways to find new objects in a dream. The key is visualization. Objects are unlikely to materialize in front of your eyes, but you can turn around and find things that weren't there before.

Find dream objects in your pocket, behind you, under a rock, in a drawer, behind a tree, in a box... you can pretty much improvise as you go!

If you are more practical, try going to a place where you would find that kind of object (such as a restaurant to find food, or a zoo to find monkeys). You should find a way that works best for you.

How to Talk to Your Subconscious

When you know how to lucid dream, you have easy access to your subconscious mind. You can communicate directly with it to gain deeper insights about yourself and how you perceive the world. It is definitely something worth trying when you are awake in dreams.

Once you become lucid, the simplest way to communicate with your subconscious mind is to personify it. Create a dream character (human or animal) that you are happy to talk to, and then ask those open and direct questions. You may be surprised by some of the answers you get straight from the horse’s mouth.

Lucid Dream Research

As you can see, knowing how to control your dreams is a matter of talking the same language as your subconscious mind. It is not always a literal translation.

Many impossible feats are perfectly acceptable in the dream-world - while other seemingly logical things may escape you. It's your goal to decipher the rules and discover new ways to control your dreams.

3.) How to Maintain Dream Control (And Why You Sometimes Shouldn't)

When you're determined to **actively control your lucid dream**, it's really important that you stay focused and lucid at all times.

Without this mental focus, you will experience continual wavering of your level of consciousness. The dreaming self will keep trying to engulf your dream with its own imagery, and you'll end up in a frustrating battle of *conscious ego vs. dream*.

How to Maintain Dream Control

Here is an example of a dream where I lost control:

> “I'm running along a beach somewhere in Asia when I notice the colors are all wrong. The sand is too yellow, the sky is too deep blue; it's like someone turned up the contrast on a picture. I realize I must be dreaming.
>
> I see a cave at the end of the beach and run towards it, knowing that Pete is inside. As I enter, he's right there waiting for me, looking exactly how he does in real life. As I start to think what we should do next, I sense danger is lurking outside the cave...
>
> There are three guard dogs closing in on the entrance - growling, drooling and baring their teeth. I didn't want this! I panic, semi-lucidly closing the doors to my cave as Pete comes to see what's happening. He forms a gun with his fingers and starts shooting the angry dogs through a gap in the door: PIAOW! PIAOW!
>
> The absurdity hits me and I become fully lucid. I open the doors, feeling confident in my ability to deal with the dogs, and smudge them out with my fingers like I'm erasing pencil marks. The dogs disappear.

But then I start to lose my lucidity again... Now, three giant purple gorilla monsters start closing in on us. I remember Pete's trick and shoot them down with my fingers - PIAOW! - And they get actual bullet wounds in their chests. Instead of falling down, they look sheepish and walk away.

Finally, I feel in control and start my adventure. I say out loud "I know I'm here - now what shall I do!" I drop my glasses into the sand [*NB: glasses used to be my reality check; you don't need them while dreaming*] and dive into the sea. I open my eyes underwater - for a second it is murky, then I open my real eyes by accident!

I see the pillow next to my face as my awareness shoots back to the real world. I immediately close my eyes again and manage to stay in the dream - unfortunately my lucidity is all but lost. Now people are shouting "Shark! Shark!" at me so I swim back to the shore.

Instead of washing up on the beach, the sea is now a giant swimming pool and I climb out. Something scratches my leg and causes pain - the shark? - So I turn around and grab the tail fin. I pull him out with super strength. It's a great blue whale with one big sad eye looking at me. I let him go and, my lucidity lost, I soon wake up.

I lie very still in bed and start to visualize my next lucid dream. I'm thinking space would be a good setting, and that I should practice spinning to stay lucid. I drowsily think "Oh no that will feel like space-gravity is crushing me!" Before I can think of anything else, I'm semi-lucidly floating in space...

A little man is packing a 3D jigsaw sphere around me, slowly trapping me like a chick inside an egg. There is room to sit up, but my legs curve upwards impossibly around the inside. The last piece is put in place and I am fully enclosed. The sphere starts rolling in space, this way and that, until eventually the dream fades to black."

So what did I do wrong on that occasion? I can think of three things:

1. **I didn't cement my lucidity at the start.** As discussed earlier in How to Stay Lucid, I failed to ground myself in the dream by rubbing my hands together, observing my palms or some other feature close-up, or saying out loud "I'm dreaming" (this acknowledgement came all too late).

2. **I didn't remind myself I was dreaming.** As a knock-on effect of failing to ground myself at the start, I also forgot to remind myself I was dreaming at regular intervals as time went on. Lucidity can fade on its own as the dream evolves and I had no way of pulling it back - so I lost control.

3. **I didn't set a lucid dream intention.** When I became lucid, I remembered to seek out Pete as planned, but I had no idea what to do next. If I'd set a lucid dream intention while awake (say, go swimming together) I wouldn't have been left wondering and open to the dream's will of the dog attack.

(Incidentally, opening my real eyes was just unlucky. I already knew that closing or opening my eyes while lucid would cause this. Sometimes I still can't help myself.)

These three simple actions, taking just a few seconds to implement in the dream world, would have changed the entire course of my lucid dream. Instead, it became a frustrating struggle to maintain control against my dreaming self.

However, this isn't all bad... While at first glance I failed to stay in control and do all sorts of ego-gratifying activities in my lucid dream, I did get to have a potential learning experience with my subconscious dreaming self. And this can be a good reason to relinquish control of your next lucid dream altogether...

Listening to the Subconscious Dreaming Self

As we've learned, *lucid dreaming* doesn't have to equate directly to *dream control*. While being able to willfully manipulate your dream world is fun, many experienced lucid dreamers prefer to just consciously observe their dreams lucidly. This gives your dreaming self the opportunity to send you all kinds of messages and life-changing insights via the medium of a fully conscious dream. It can be far more profound than interpreting any non-lucid dream.

In the example above, I kept fighting this. My goal for this dream was to have full control. But perhaps my dream *didn't want* to be controlled on this occasion. Perhaps it had something more important to tell me...

My inability to control the nightmarish elements not only suggests a lack of consciousness; it also suggests my dreaming self was trying to tell me something important. In hindsight, it would have been a good idea to speak to the dogs and the gorilla monsters and ask what they wanted and whether we could work it out. Instead, I killed them - which is the lucid dream equivalent of simple denying a problem exists.

We can also interpret the possible meaning of the little man packing me into an egg. Despite re-entering the dream lucidly, I quickly lost control to my dreaming self. Perhaps the reason I was regressed to a fetal form trapped in an egg, was so I could waste no more time running around influencing my dream for gratuitous reasons.

Dream Control or Passive Observation - Which Is Better?

As a lucid dreamer, I encourage you to notch up experiences in both camps. At first, you'll probably be drawn to dream control and there's no denying it's a whole lot of fun. But when you decide you want to delve deeper into your own mind, try just being a passive observer in your lucid dream.

You'll see that the dream evolves on its own quite readily, and you can ask questions along the way if you choose, or just enjoy the experience. It will be miles more memorable than the observation of non-lucid dreams, as you have all the clarity of mind and vivid sensory experience provided by a lucid dream.

Just remember, whether you choose to maintain dream control or observe without interaction, you must always ground yourself in a lucid dream when it begins. Then keep reminding yourself that you're dreaming. This is essential for ongoing dream consciousness or you risk fading to the ranks of non-lucidity.

4.) How to Create Dream Characters

It's a common issue to call out for or seek a new character only to find they don't show up. And when they do finally appear, they look nothing like the person you were seeking in the first place. So, how to combat this?

Here are a number of techniques from my own research and experience that you can use to summon new lucid dream characters into existence. I'll also show you how to adapt their appearance once they're standing in front of you.

Beyond this, it's important to realize that dream characters (or dream figures) are not merely made-up drones that exist solely for our amusement. They may be purely symbolic, but they may also represent one element of your psyche, or even have greater consciousness than you, dear dreamer.

Dream characters can be a great learning opportunity. So treat them with respect and consider allowing them to portray themselves as they wish, instead of always trying to mold them into the perfect object of affection.

6 Ways to Create Dream Characters

Before attempting to summon a new figure, make sure you increase your lucidity by doing a tactile reality check, reminding yourself that you're dreaming, and making some firm observations about your current environment.

1. Round the Bend
Visualize or *expect* the character you want to see standing behind you or just around a corner, out of sight. When your expectation is fully ingrained and you can truly sense their presence, turn around or go look around the corner. Bingo!

2. Ask the Dream
Try Robert Waggoner's method of asking the "awareness behind the dream" to do the work for you. This simply means calling out to the dream with your wish. Try "show me my dream guide", "show me myself in 10 years" or even "show me my ultimate fantasy". That way, you're allowing the dreaming subconscious to present what it wants and you won't risk violating dream figures that exist for a whole other purpose.

3. Dream Door
Open a dream door and reach inside, expecting to grab the hand of your intended dream figure and pull them through. This also works using mirrors as liquid portals. Just reach in and *expect* to find the person you seek. As with most of these methods, your underlying expectation is absolutely key to your successful conjuring.

4. Paint a Picture
Remember Penny Crayon? This one's quite surreal but, then again, that's the nature of the subconscious dreaming mind. Get creative and paint a picture (your hand in the air works fine) of the person you want to meet, however crudely. It's not the motion of your finger-brush but the image you create in your mind that will pop into life!

5. Get Morphing
This is another highly creative way of summoning a dream character into existence. Choose an object, like a wall or a lamp post, or even another person, and sincerely *will* them to morph into a specific dream figure. I once watched my lucid dream guide peel himself out of a tree this way. It was A-W-E-S-O-M-E to watch.

6. **Shaping Up**
Finally, if the summoned character looks somehow different from reality, you can ask them to do better. Say "I'm going to look away and when I look back you will look like the closest representation of X my imagination can create." Be warned, the effect may be short lasting if your dream has no interest in humoring you…

Dream Characters are Fickle Beasts

Many consciously-created dream characters can be rather fickle. They can unexpectedly become ugly or turn into someone else altogether. It's not *their* will to look like the person you've molded them into. And it's not the will of the dream either. So they may degrade into perfect strangers pretty fast if you don't invest a lot of conscious effort into their ongoing appearance.

I believe this is the battle that occurs between the conscious mind (let's say, you seeking a gratuitous sexual partner) and the subconscious mind (the awareness behind the dream that is quite separate from your own awareness and agenda).

This is one reason why it's wise to heed experts like Robert Waggoner and allow your dream figures to choose what they want to do and how they interact with you. Because this is the dream world, and when it comes to conscious vs. subconscious, the latter always wins in the end.

So, if you really want to put your dream characters to good use, instead of demanding they look different and fulfil your superficial needs, you might want to try asking: "How's things?" "Why are you here?" "Can I help you?" or "Tell me something cool!" When you delve deeper with lucidity you're more likely to be impressed with the result.

5.) Setting a Lucid Dream Intention

Often, lucid dreams are a lot more rewarding if you consciously plan to fulfil an objective before you go to sleep. This is called **setting a lucid dream intention**.

For instance, you may decide in advance to talk to your lucid dream characters and ask them what they represent. Or you may choose to travel through time and view the Earth in the year 3,000.

Without this kind of planning, my lucid dreams tend to fizzle out. I often find it difficult to think laterally in a lucid dream and am very focused on what's right in front of me. So if I don't plan what I want to do in advance, I end up roaming round the dreamscape looking for fun stuff, but which rarely materializes in a pleasing way.

The other night I was semi-lucid and I hadn't set any lucid dream intention. I found myself in a room full of instruments (I had been in a music shop the day before) and automatically tried to play the piano. But because of my impulsiveness and lack of clarity of thought, I didn't realize that half the black keys were missing. I played and played, but the sound was all wrong.

Other times, I just get distracted and forget I'm lucid at all. When this happens, the potential for an amazing lucid dream quickly dissolves and I'm left with a regular dream - albeit a little more vivid than usual. So the very first thing to do when you become lucid is to ***ground yourself*** in the dream (say "I'm lucid. I'm dreaming. This is all a dream.") and then recall your lucid dream intention...

How to Set a Lucid Dream Intention

This is a simple act of thinking about what you'd like to do before you go to sleep. Incorporate it into the **MILD technique** if you like. Let's say tonight I want to go diving in a tropical coral reef. The first thing I'll need to tackle is getting to the ocean. I decide in advance that I'll use a dream door to teleport myself onto a boat over Great Barrier Reef. I'll want to make sure it's daytime and the weather is nice, so I already have an image of myself on a boat in the sun.

Next, I'll envisage the ocean being nice and calm and sparkly. I don't want to go diving in murky, choppy waters. Finally, I'll imagine myself diving effortlessly into the water, feeling how refreshing it is, and swimming along with ease. I have no trouble breathing underwater as I have gills now - of course! You may want to wear an oxygen tank or you may be comfortable breathing naturally. It all comes down to your level of lucidity and your state of mind. I can stop planning my lucid dream intention here - or I can go on to imagine elaborate scenes of tropical fish and funky sea creatures. Since I have already set the scene, I will probably stop here and leave the rest up to my dreaming subconscious tonight.

Getting From A to B

Of course, you don't need to plan every single detail in advance - that would ruin the surprise. Think of it as looking up a route on a map before you take a journey. You need to know how to get from A to B or you'll get lost. This provides you with a helpful guide, but does not predict the entire experience of the journey itself, so there are still lots of surprises along the way. And because you checked your route in advance, you will more likely reach your destination.

At the same time - take it easy. There is no rush to fulfil your lucid dream intention and if, for whatever reason, you can't achieve it, take the pressure off yourself and move on to something else. If you can't find a dream door to teleport yourself - don't panic. You could fly to the sea instead, or spin around and create a new dream scene from scratch. Or if that's a complete dead end, create an alternative backup intention to make your lucid dream worthwhile.

My backup intention is to examine my surroundings and increase my lucidity until it's so solid and real I get kicks out of simply touching things and telling myself "this isn't even real, it's all in my head" (crazy eh?) I also seek out other dream figures and engage them in conversation. They can be very intriguing at times and offer fascinating insight into my own subconscious state of mind. It's also very easy to do - just grab someone and start talking. So if I can't go reef diving tonight I can at least get some cool subconscious insights instead.

Final Thoughts

So, whether you want to fly to the moon, morph into an animal, or just follow the subconscious action of the dream - the most fulfilling lucid dreams are the ones that achieve something you set out to do ahead of becoming lucid.

When you're setting a lucid dream intention, you have one major advantage. You can predict ahead of time that your dream will be illogical and you can plan appropriate ways of dealing with potential road blocks. This is really useful if your lucidity isn't turned up sharply - which is often the case for beginners. If you are going to fly to the moon tonight, you will need all the insight you can get, so plan ahead while you are awake and you won't be disappointed.

6.) Five Lucid Dream Challenges

Here are a few challenges that beginners often have…

Challenge #1 - Fly with Perfect Control

Everyone loves to have flying dreams - it provides us with the ultimate freedom from our real-world physical limitations. Learning how to fly in a lucid dream comes completely naturally for some people. For others, it takes a little practice.

I came in the latter group. When I first learned lucid dreaming, I found it difficult to fly because my logical brain kept holding me back. I would often get 10 or 15 feet in the air then falter and fall to the ground. Whatever the cause, this became a learned behavior, so eventually I had to consciously "unlearn" it in my dreams.

First I began by bouncing over the landscape, knowing each time I would bounce gently off the ground, light as a feather, then return safely with no harm done. This made me feel in control of my flying dreams and gave me more confidence of my ability to be weightless.

Soon, bouncing turned to hovering and floating everywhere around the dreamscape at a reasonably safe height, and as I had more flying experiences, I got rapidly better. Within a few lucid dreams I was able to fly up around the tops of sky scrapers, above the clouds, into space and around the moon. Like everything in my lucid dreams, it was a steep learning curve. I then went into hyperspace mode, flying through the universe at impossible speeds, watching the stars whoosh by. Flying dreams are the best!

Challenge #2 - Run through Walls

Like flying dreams, here is another exhilarating lucid dream challenge for beginners. Walking or pushing your body through the wall is not only a great reality check - it's also a great learning experience. By passing your body through physical objects, you will quickly write a new rule book for the unreality of the dream-world. It will rapidly improve your ability to take control of your guided dreams and get exactly what you want, without any futile mucking around.

First, gently push your hand against the wall and imagine it going right through. Don't think of the wall as a solid object. Focus on how your hand might *feel* if it simply pushed right through. Your expectation is key.

Once you get the hang of this, it will become easier and easier. The next step is to walk your entire body through a wall or other solid object. Think of yourself as a ghost passing through matter from another dimension. If you keep your eyes open you should be able to see the wall interior.

Sometimes, I find that moving at the wall too slowly causes me to overthink it and I bounce off it in disbelief. So it pays to be bold and go for it: run directly at a wall really fast, thinking about how great it will feel when you pass through the other side. You definitely aren't going to smack into it at that speed. Ok?

Once in a lucid dream, I was running through walls in an apartment building on the top floor of a skyscraper. I knew I was near the exterior wall and just as I thought about it I flew out into the night sky, the ground falling away at my feet. Of course, I was the architect of that moment and it was my expectation that caused me to run right out of the building in mid-air. Equally, it was my confidence in my new abilities that enabled me to fly off into the night, rather than fall to the

ground with a splat. So always remember that having confidence and bold expectations will enable you to achieve anything you want in your lucid dreams.

Challenge #3 - Follow the Subconscious Thread

Sometimes it pays to simply explore your dreamscape in its natural form - something I call following the subconscious thread, or passive lucid dreaming. While maintaining your lucidity (or self-awareness) in the dream, you give up your active control of the dream to your subconscious mind. You are now an *observer* in your virtual reality world, but not a *controller*.

Look around your dreamscape and explore the scenery. Pick up souvenirs and talk to dream characters, without consciously influencing any outcomes. Allow your subconscious inner self the opportunity to show you whatever it wants and engage in some live dream interpretation.

I like to find an observation platform - perhaps a cloud or a tall building - and observe a busy cityscape below. It is quite breathtaking to observe this complex scene knowing it is all taking place effortlessly inside your own head.

Another neat trick suggested by Robert Waggoner in his book, Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self, is to ask your lucid dream a question. Start by saying "Show me something really amazing!" and wait to see what happens. Your subconscious will react to your request and present a new twist in the dream. Robert's method of connecting with the inner self is an excellent one and I highly recommend his book if you are a beginner lucid dreamer and want to know where to go next.

Challenge #4 - Make Day Turn to Night

I stumbled onto this lucid dream challenge purely by accident but it was a great visual experience. It's better for beginners who feel more confident about manipulating the dreamscape so wait until you're feeling highly lucid in the dream before trying this. Also remember that your expectation is key.

Probably the easiest way to turn a day-time scene into a night-time scene is to turn around or look away from the main attraction and visualize how the new night sky will look before you turn back. This visualization creates an expectation in your mind, and your dreaming subconscious (who ultimately creates all the scenery) will see to the rest. You are merely giving your subconscious the idea.

Another way to approach this challenge is to paint the sky with the sweep of your hand, or literally breathe color into the atmosphere. Find a creative method that works for you, and be rewarded with a new guided dream scene in seconds. Turning day to night also gives you the perfect opportunity to gaze up into the night sky and get lost in the stars - or zoom up there in an instant. It can be a magnificent experience and I have had numerous star-gazing dreams that I will never forget.

Challenge #5 - Eat Your Favorite Food

Oh boy oh boy oh boy oh boy! I love to eat food in lucid dreams... It has the potential to be the best gastronomic experience of your life :)

Lucid dream food is *very* realistic and *very* delicious. The reason it's often better than real life because it's as perfect as you can imagine it to be. And your dream taste buds don't become accustomed to the flavor - so each bite can be more mouthwateringly delicious than the last. There is also the nice bonus that dream calories don't add fat to your physical body, so you can eat all you want.

Once you become lucid, seek out a place that you would expect to find food in the real world: restaurants, cafes and kitchens. In the right location, you should have no problem finding some really delicious food.

Alternatively, manifest food from out of nowhere - just follow the expectation rule. For instance, you might expect to find a large Black Forest cake hiding behind the next rock in the forest. Feel free to throw logic out the window and work with

the dream scene, rather than against it. As a beginner I always found it easier to discover new objects *behind* something already there, rather than making it materialize from nowhere.

As you become accustomed to using the power of expectation, try this: grab a pen and draw your desired food in the air in front of you, however crudely. Then imagine it popping into life and becoming 3-dimensional so that you can pick it up and eat it. You'll soon see that when it comes to the dreaming mind, there are no limitations and no logical outcomes. Use that principle to your advantage!

7.) Lucid Dreaming Sex: Exploring the Erotic Side of Lucid Dreams

A lot of people are interested in lucid dreaming sex and that's no surprise really. In a lucid dream, you can fulfil your ultimate sexual fantasy and it can feel just as real as waking life. Indeed, it's the #1 reason why most people desire to learn lucid dreaming in the first place - and internet marketers' just love to flaunt the idea of lucid dream sex. The question is, are these erotic dreams really all they're cracked up to be - and are beginners capable of them?

Is Lucid Dream Sex Possible?

You bet. But it's not all that easy to initiate sex in a lucid dream, and that's because our subconscious has quite a different agenda...

For instance, it's quite common to become self-aware in a dream and go in search of a sexual partner - only to find your Brad Pitt or Scarlett Johansson has transformed into an ugly, withered being. It's a real turn off. Other times, you can lock on to your ideal sexual partner, or use your skills to morph them into someone more attractive, but then find they are completely disinterested in you. They may look straight through you, or walk away entirely.

Remember that many dream figures are projections of your own subconscious self, and their mission may not be to find intimacy with you. Other dream figures seem to be mere autonomous characters which have no soul (if you like) and so no particular agenda. I'm not sure why these characters exist or whether I've misinterpreted them completely.

But ultimately, you can have a lot more lucid dreaming sex if you identify what motivates the dream figure and, rather than treating them as a sexual object, open up to them and offer a shared intimate experience.

It also helps if you make yourself fully lucid beforehand.

In fact, it's a good idea to cultivate healthy interactions with lucid dream figures in general. More often than not, they are meaningful representations of your inner self and they deserve to be treated with respect. If you go around abusing dream figures, be prepared to be sorely disappointed when, at any moment, they have the ability to turn your experience into something of a nightmare.

Are Lucid Dream Orgasms Real?

Ok, let's assume you've made a connection with another dream figure and are having full blown lucid dream sex. What's going to happen? Believe it or not, there have been scientific studies into orgasms during lucid dreams.

Scientists have found that lucid orgasms can sometimes be accompanied by a real physical response, including increased heart rate, changes in vascular tissue and other muscular reactions. Sometimes, however, it's purely in the mind - although this doesn't make it any less real to the dreamer in their super-sensory dream environment. There is also heaps of anecdotal evidence to show that men who experience a lucid dream orgasm also ejaculate in real life.

The problem many beginners will find is that it's difficult to hold onto conscious lucidity until the critical moment. A sexual lucid dream is highly arousing and beginner oneironauts will most likely wake up before the experience has even got going. In this way, lucid dreaming sex isn't ideal for beginners. You'd do far better to learn the ropes of conscious dreaming and understand how to ground yourself better so that when exciting things happen, you don't wake up. I

wouldn't recommend attempting to lucid dream orgasm without first being able to prolong a lucid dream for, say, 30 minutes which denotes a fair proficiency. However, that's probably not going to stop you trying, now is it? :)

Is Lucid Dreaming Sex Ethical?

How do you feel about having realistic sex in a lucid dream with someone who is not your real-life partner? Are you actually cheating or is it all just a dream?

This is a very personal issue and I think you should take it into discussion with your partner and make your own minds up. Generally, I feel that it's ok to explore your sexuality in this alternate dream dimension. I don't see why we should create such restrictions for our partners either - after all, a lucid dream, no matter how vivid, is still just a dream. The arousal and the emotion of lucid dream sex is not defined by another human being, it's all created in your own mind.

There is only one caveat to this argument, and again, it's a debatable issue but I would like to raise it anyway. Let's say you're attracted to someone you know in real life who is not your romantic partner. Should you release those sexual frustrations with them inside the safety of a lucid dream?

It depends on the circumstances, but having erotic dream sex with someone you have to face in real life may serve to heighten your attraction to them, which wouldn't exactly be fair on your partner. It's akin to fantasizing over someone you know with the underlying desire to hook up in real life. What does that say about your current relationship?

At the end of the day, however, sometimes things happen during lucidity which we never expected - nor controlled. Just like regular dreams, our subconscious can dish up some bizarre scenarios and with our rational minds half asleep we just go with it. So don't beat yourself up about sexual dreams that go awry - indeed, Freud would say you are a perfectly normal human being...

8.) How to Have Lucid Flying Dreams

Flying dreams can be the most uplifting, liberating and instantly gratifying lucid dreams there are. I'm sure every lucid dreamer has done it. If you're like me, you'll fly, float, soar, hover and glide every time you're lucid - it never gets old.

How to Have Flying Dreams

Now it's helpful to understand that some people are complete naturals when it comes to launching and controlling their lucid flying dreams. However, some of us need some pointers. That's because flying in lucid dreams is not necessarily easy for the uninitiated. It's not your typical experience to be able to fly in reality - so when you try to shoot off in the dreamscape, your conscious brain kicks in with limitations: "Now listen, sonny, just what the heck are you up to...? You can't fly! What of gravity?!"

Even when gravity isn't your concern, you may find yourself getting tangled in power lines, bumping into rooftops, or failing to take off altogether.

But why do we sabotage our flights of fancy? Why can't we just let go and have fun with it - after all, we *know* we're in fantasy land...

You Think That's Air You're Breathing?

The best way I can describe the mentality for having flying dreams is this. Remember in *The Matrix*, when Morpheus asks Neo how he beat him in a virtual reality fight? Was it because he was stronger, faster or fitter in the simulated world? No - his winning had nothing to do with muscle mass or speed or oxygen.

"You think that's air you're breathing?" Morpheus probed in their simulated dojo.

The lesson was this: Morpheus beat Neo because he truly *believed* he was better. And when it comes to lucid dreaming, it's exactly the same concept. You have to take control of your expectations. You have to truly believe you are a confident, experienced flyer. Then nothing can bring you down.

Have Flying Dreams like Superman

Some people, in their very first lucid dream, have all the confidence in the world to jump off a skyscraper and shoot over the city like Superman. Lucky buggers.

When I began lucid dreaming, my ability to fly was faltering at best. At worst, I simply couldn't even take off the ground. I felt like a right bean standing there *willing* myself to shoot into the sky... only for nothing to happen.

How do we get around this? What's the secret to having flying dreams?

The simple answer is to learn to walk before you run. (Or in this case, learn to hover before you fly.*)*

Step #1 - Increase Your Lucidity

Trying to control any aspect of your dream with only partial lucidity is a losing battle. Your ego (and its desire to fly) is battling with your subconscious dreaming mind (and its own doubts about flying). So first you need to establish yourself as the pilot of this mission.

Do this by performing a reality check and affirming to yourself that you are dreaming. Do it several times. Examine your surroundings, increase your conscious awareness of the dreamscape, and intensify all sensory input. Now you're fully lucid and ready to go.

Step #2 - Bounce, Bounce, Bounce

Begin your flight training by running and bouncing along the lucid landscape. Allow yourself to do low-gravity jumps but always come back to the ground at the end of each one. That gives you a mental safety net.

Allow yourself to bounce higher and further, feeling how each movement is smooth and easy. There are never any sudden drops or thuds as you touch back down - in fact don't even think about this. Maintain optimism. Flying dreams should, after all, be very uplifting and even euphoric affairs.

Step #3 - Hovering High

Your second lesson requires you to build on this confidence. In your lucid dream, stand on the ground and hover just a few inches in the air. Remind yourself that it's all a dream and nothing is real.

Feel how much control you have over your own movement. Then hover higher - a few feet up - and again make some precise movements. Hover forwards and backwards. This all just reaffirms how good you are at hovering.

Now, hover straight up, higher and higher, until the buildings below look like little models. This is the real test of your control. If you falter, remind yourself again that you are dreaming. Keep your lucidity level high.

Step #4 - Soaring in Space

For me, the absolute best training ground for super-fast flying dreams is in space. Everyone knows that there is no gravity in space so you don't have to worry about falling.

You can zoom about all you like and learn what it is that controls your movement while floating, gliding or rocketing at incredible speeds. The only problem you may find is remembering which way is up!

The best way to get into space is to hover up high... Expect to pass through a cloud layer and suddenly emerge in space, floating among the twinkling stars, with the blue planet in full view below.

V. Miscellaneous Lucid Dreaming Information

1.) Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation is a lack of sleep that is needed to function normally. It can be caused by working night shifts; traveling through multiple time zones; sleep disorders like insomnia; stress; depression; the menopause; scientific studies into sleep and dreaming; or interrogation and torture.

However, the main cause is at the root of our busy modern society. We just don't have enough time to get everything done.

This problem causes American businesses to lose $100 billion in lost productivity each year. Worse, tired workers are thought to be responsible for many major disasters - ranging from the giant oil spillage of the Exxon Valdez, to the nuclear meltdowns of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl.

However, in the realm of science, staying awake for lengthy periods is useful for sleep experiments. Scientists can learn a lot by looking at a person's behavior, as they encounter confusion, hallucinations, cognitive problems and micro sleep.

If you've never gone for more than 24 hours without sleep, you won't be familiar with the effects of long term sleep loss. But sufferers of insomnia will tell you: it is definitely not a pleasant experience.

Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Whereas *insomnia* describes chronic sleeplessness, anyone can experience short term sleep loss as a side effect of some other problem. The physical effects of sleep deprivation affect the whole body, including:

Recent studies also show a link between sleep deprivation and obesity. People who are deprived of sleep find it harder to break down sugar, increasing the risk of diabetes and obesity in the long term.

Interestingly, when they finally manage to sleep, sufferers of insomnia are more likely to have lucid dreams. Perhaps this is because the normal sleep cycles are thrown out of balance and conscious dreams are more easily triggered.

Needless to say, the physical effects of sleep deprivation are wide-ranging and severe. In fact, if you go for long enough without any sleep, the result can be deadly. This is the case for sufferers of Fatal Familial Insomnia, a rare but incurable sleep disorder that causes total sleeplessness and ultimately death.

2.) Escaping From Nightmares with Lucid Dreaming

Becoming lucidly aware while dreaming is probably the most effective way of **escaping from nightmares**. In fact, many of my early lucid dreams arose from moments of sheer terror in a nightmare, which triggered my conscious brain to think: *hang on, what on Earth is going on here? I must be dreaming!*

Knowing that I now had control of the dream, I then had two options. I could both take the short cut and shout "WAKE UP!" - Or I could confront the source of my fear and figure out the meaning of the nightmare in real time. At first I took the short cut but as I built more confidence I began to question my nightmare figures and learn some really insightful things about my subconscious.

In this article I'll explain the best way for beginners (including children) to become lucid in their nightmares and take control of that evil bogeyman. You'll soon learn that nightmares are actually a very handy backdoor to lucid dreaming, and that the nightmares figures themselves provide an excellent opportunity for some self-psychotherapy, in order to heal real life fears and anxieties.

The Meaning of Nightmares

In the West, the meaning of nightmares is to reveal our darkest inner fears in literal and symbolic forms. We all deal with them at some time in our lives, but few people consider lucid dreaming to escape from nightmares.

The most common nightmare is the classic fear of being chased - either by a monster, witch, demon, vampire, madman or other fearful entity. According to **dream** this reveals our evolutionary fear of being hunted by the wild predators from our ancient past.

Other nightmare themes include the death of loved ones, falling, being physically injured, creepy crawlies, and being trapped. Some people experience recurring nightmares which signifies an ongoing psychological issue. Fortunately, lucid dreaming offers the perfect platform for dealing with recurring nightmares.

You are more likely to suffer from nightmares when you are:

- Sick (especially fever)
- Stressed or anxious
- Having relationship problems
- Traumatized by violence
- Taking drugs or alcohol

Drinking alcohol takes its toll by suppressing all **REM sleep** for the first few hours of the night. By the time the alcohol wears off, you begin your REM-rebound, with vivid dreams that are more emotionally intense than usual. This can lead to nightmares if you have any particular issues making you feel anxious.

Certain medications can also increase nightmares, such as L-dopa for Parkinson's disease, and beta blockers for heart conditions. However they may also raise dream intensity, which causes greater self-awareness and lucid dreams.

Lucid Dreams to Stop Nightmares

Since I began lucid dreaming, I've learned some good ways to deal with nightmares. The first step means becoming lucid - so that you can think clearly in the dream and apply some conscious logic. For adults and children alike, the best way to do this is ask yourself if you are dreaming during the waking day. This is called a **reality check**. In particular, check your reality when unexpected things happen or when you feel particularly emotionally charged or fearful.

Another way to increase your self-awareness in dreams is to become highly self-aware during the day. Look at your hands right now. Examine the skin in detail, see all the tiny little hairs and indentations. Rub your fingers together and pay attention to the sensation it creates. You have now intensified your awareness of your hands. Do this with other things; appreciating the space around you and in particular how you interact with it. You will be able to perform this same task when lucid in a dream, and the richness of the dream reality may be shocking.

Next time you are experiencing a nightmare, you are much more likely to have a sudden jolt of self-awareness. You'll question the reality of the dream and with that comes instant lucidity. Your senses will become supercharged and the dream-world will intensify and become much more lifelike.

Now you have two options to escape from your nightmare:

1. **Wake Yourself Up** - This is the knee-jerk response I always used to do. In that moment of lucidity I shouted "WAKE UP!" and blinked hard in the dream. I would immediately wake up in bed.

1) aching muscles
2) blurred vision
3) depression
4) color blindness
5) drowsiness
6) loss of concentration
7) weak immune system
8) dizziness
9) dark circles of the eyes
10) fainting
11) confusion
12) hallucinations
13) symptoms of drunkenness
14) tremors
15) headaches
16) hernia
17) hyperactivity
18) impatience
19) irritability
20) memory loss
21) nausea
22) psychosis
23) slow reaction times
24) slurred speech
25) weight loss or gain
26) constant yawning

2. **Face Your Fears** - Later, I came to realize that the source of my fear was just another part of my own psyche. It gave me the courage to talk to the nightmare monster and ask what it wanted. With my therapy complete, I then flew away and explored my lucid dream world how I wanted.

Note that confronting a nightmare figure doesn't stop you from having nightmares ever again - but it does last to rest the issue at hand.

Final Thoughts

Escaping from nightmares is actually how a lot of children and teenagers begin lucid dreaming naturally. It is the emotional intensity of the dream that can trigger lucidity, and from there the lucid dream world is your oyster...

So keep practicing reality checks and raising your self-awareness. Next time you have a nightmare it could yield a very pleasant surprise. And if you can, have the courage to confront your nightmare figure - it is a wasted opportunity not to!

3.) When Lucid Dreams Become Nightmares

Several lucid dream researchers have spoken of their **lucid nightmares**: bad dreams in which the dreamer is aware but loses the ability to willfully control events. The subconscious mind takes over and delivers a message to the dreamer in as much emotionally-wrenching graphic content as it deems necessary. A lucid nightmare.

I'm not talking about nightmares which turn into lucid dreams - or lucid dreams in which consciousness is lost and a nightmare takes over. This is a highly specific (and quite unusual) state of awareness in which we can learn a heck of a lot about our inner fears and repressions. Although possibly frightening, we can also take part in a kind of live dream (nightmare) interpretation and apply this knowledge to our waking lives.

What are Lucid Nightmares?

What's going on here? As a lucid dreamer you know that when you have clarity of thought and you know you're dreaming, you also have the ability to wilfully guide the dream. No?

This was generally my interpretation - until I actually experienced my first lucid nightmare and discovered this is not always the case.

It's a well-accepted fact that lucid dreaming simply entails self-awareness in dreams. Dream control is a welcome side-effect for most people but it comes with varying degrees of intensity - and is never 100% under the influence of the ego. You do not, for example, consciously create every cloud in the sky or every bird that flies overhead or every blade of grass underfoot.

In truth, the subconscious mind plays a very active role in lucid dreaming. And when the subconscious decides to air some anxieties, you have a nightmare. If you happen to be lucid at the time, your perception of the coming events will be considerably heightened.

When this happens, you still know you are dreaming and the intensity of the dream is incredibly real. But instead of consciously guiding your dream, you may become sucked in to a nightmare plot - and begin consciously observing whatever comes up. Your subconscious is so powerful in its intent, you can't overrule its manifestations.

You can experience the same thing in a regular lucid dream (i.e. not a lucid nightmare). In fact, many lucid dream researchers encourage it. I often relinquish control of my lucid dreams and allow my subconscious to show me what it wants. I am still lucid dreaming because I am highly self-aware, the dreamscape is ultra-vivid and I can consciously react to the dream elements that are unfolding. "Passive lucid dreaming" as I've come to call it, can be far more enlightening than my conscious dream choices. Why let my flawed ego take control when my inner self has so much more to share?

In a lucid nightmare this passive following response can lead to disturbing imagery. That's not a bad thing. Think of it as an opportunity to face your inner fears and overcome them. You can seriously enrich your waking and dream lives as a result.

Sometimes conscious nightmares can be upsetting because you have no ability to control your inner demons and they terrify you. The childish method of shouting "WAKE UP" can help at this point - but I recommend confronting your demons or just letting the nightmare play out its message so you can gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Remember, dreams and nightmares represent our nightly visit to the therapist's couch, and there is no psychological issue that can't be examined within the lucid state.

4.) False Awakenings

False awakenings are a curious phenomenon for lucid dreamers and non-lucid dreamers alike. They are essentially ultra-vivid dreams in which you are convinced you have woken up in physical reality. They are most likely to happen when you are excited about a big day ahead - and if you're a lucid dreamer.

Self-awareness determines how consciously "in tune" you are with your current reality. Lucid dreamers aim to be highly self-aware while awake and while dreaming, for the greatest frequency of lucid dreams. But the modern world is so distracting, most people are not very self-aware at all.

And this comes into play in the paradox of a false awakening. The dream of awakening is highly vivid, suggesting a high level of self-awareness (for a dream, at least). Yet many false awakenings go unrecognized; assumed to be waking reality, there is absolutely no awareness that it's all a dream.

A false awakening may involve getting up, having breakfast, getting dressed, and heading out for work... all the things you do every day on autopilot. It can all appear all too real and solid to warrant questioning its authenticity. Indeed, you will only appreciate how real a false awakening is when it happens to you - it reveals the remarkable capacity of the human brain to emulate reality.

Waking Up from False Awakenings

Eventually, you will start doing a more complex task in your dream that draws on part of the conscious brain that is still asleep. Maybe you look in the bathroom mirror, or attempt to read a signpost on your way to work. This exposes the illusory nature of the dream and BAM! You wake up.

Or perhaps not. Some people report having multiple false awakenings in succession, doing the same things over and over, never knowing when they have truly woken up. They keep unconsciously rebooting the waking dream scenario... As uncanny as it sounds, if you have just had one false waking experience, you are much more likely to have another. The conditions are already ripe.

How to Turn False Awakenings into Lucid Dreams

1. Reality Check on Waking - Perform a reality check when you wake up every day. This is will be your best chance of recognizing a false awakening as soon as it begins.

2. Use Your Alarm Clock - Whenever you look at the time, ask yourself "Am I dreaming?" Numbers and letters are notoriously hard to read in dreams because the language centers of the brain are largely shut down. So numbers or words are prone to changing or turning into unreadable symbols after a few seconds. Your alarm clock will expose this.

3. Look At Your Reflection - Since the first thing people do in the morning is go to the bathroom, this is an ideal reality check. Allow yourself a few seconds to examine your face, check that the reflection of the room is normal, and see if you can push your hand into the mirror itself.

4. Leave Notes For Yourself - Written reminders placed around the house (like door handles, light switches and banisters) will prompt you to do a reality check and reveal if you are dreaming. Be sure to acknowledge them every morning - don't ignore them.

5. Check During Breakfast - False awakenings can involve eating breakfast so the moment you taste food or drink in the morning, do a reality check. If you are dreaming, you will suddenly be able to taste the food you are eating with more intensity, which is a wonderful wake-up call.

As a lucid dreamer, you invite more false awakenings into your dreams. This is a great opportunity to have more guided dreams, so seize the moment you wake up and ask yourself: "Am I dreaming now?"

False awakenings can be hard to spot but with practice you will become better at recognizing that curious feeling that something is not right with the world...

5.) Sleep Paralysis & Lucid Dreaming

Sleep paralysis is a natural protection mechanism that prevents you from acting out your dreams. It affects most of your body, with the exception of your eyes (allowing them to demonstrate Rapid Eye Movement), chest (so your lungs can breathe freely) and sometimes minor extremities like toes, fingertips and lips.

Sleep paralysis switches on and off around the sleep-wake border. As a result, sometimes people become aware of the paralysis and are shocked to find they can't move. This can be scary, inducing nightmarish hallucinations (but not always), and when it happens frequently it is classed as a sleep disorder.

In fact, the paralysis mechanism is a combination of mind-body tricks responsible for countless reports throughout history of alien abductions, ghostly visitations, and other terrifying night-time hallucinations.

The experience can last anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes. It doesn't always invoke visions of evil entities, but this is a common feature when you're afraid. Sufferers have seen witches, ghosts, shadow people, aliens, angels, fairies and even cartoon characters. It can happen every night or it may never happen to you at all.

So what causes this bizarre chain of events?

Sleep Paralysis: The Causes

The basic cause of this medical condition is *REM atonia*, a natural process which happens to everyone, every night. *REM* stands for Rapid Eye Movement (the phase of sleep most often connected with dreaming) and *atonia* means lack of muscle tension.

REM atonia is an essential sleep mechanism. As you fall asleep, it cuts off the electrical signals between your muscles and your brain so that you can sleep peacefully each night. In short, it stops you from acting out your dreams.

The experience of sleep paralysis occurs when your mind (in part) wakes up, but your body remains asleep. Physically asleep, you remain paralyzed. But mentally conscious, you may start to panic and the half-dreaming mind conjures up nightmarish images to "explain" what is happening, often based on cultural beliefs.

Sleep paralysis is common: half of the world's population may experience this condition at least once in their lives. The condition is more likely to arise if you are under stress and/or have disturbed sleep cycles due to shift work, narcolepsy, sleep deprivation, jet lag, and other sleep disorders. You're also more likely to encounter sleep paralysis if you practice certain lucid dreaming techniques. But that's a good thing - because under the right control, it is the gateway to lucid dreams and OBEs.

If It's Just a Dream - Why So Real?

If sleep paralysis is just a dream, then why does it feel so *real*?

Some of the effects ARE real. This state is a very clever merger of waking consciousness with the dream world. It's a bizarre mind trick.

For instance, footsteps thumping towards the bed are often a distortion of the sound of your own heartbeat, pounding in your chest due to all the adrenaline. Hearing your assailant breathing unnaturally is common too - thought to be the sound of your own gasps for breath in this panicked state.

The feeling of your body being paralyzed is real, too. Releasing yourself from the grip of the paralysis is one way to end this terrifying situation (see below).

However, the perceived difficulty to breathe properly is what causes many people to imagine an entity trying to harm them (by stopping them breathing or crushing their chest). It's important to remember here that the effect is psychosomatic.

Thankfully, the evil entities are not real. But for chronic sufferers, this is not always easy to accept. People write to me describing their episodes, believing they have genuinely encountered beings from another realm. Even after learning about the true nature of sleep paralysis and the gateway to lucid dreams, some people remain convinced that this state is really a gateway to hellish dimensions.

How to Stop Sleep Paralysis

Researchers are learning more and more about this age-old condition. Some people have a greater predisposition to sleep disorders, and these are the ones that should avoid anything which messes with their sleep cycles, including night shift work, overtiredness, jet lag and sleep deprivation.

If you have been experiencing sleep paralysis recently, there is good news: in the majority of cases, it goes away on its own. Only a tiny fraction of the population experiences chronic episodes. So try to isolate the factors that may have caused this recent bout and stop disturbing your sleep cycles.

During an episode, there are things you can do to stop sleep paralysis in its tracks. It depends on the severity of your condition but most people find they can focus on a specific task - like breaking the paralysis - to help overcome the fear.

Here's how to stop sleep paralysis in simple steps:

1. First relax your body into the paralysis... *don't* fight it forcefully as this will create panic and increase the chance of negative hallucinations.

2. Try to gently wiggle your fingers and toes. These tiny movements will eventually tell your brain that your body is awake and it will stop the atonia.

3. At the same time, try to move your eyes by blinking and looking around the room. Again, the goal is to establish movement to fully awaken you.

4. Try to move your lips and facial muscles.

5. If your breathing feels restricted by the paralysis, remember that you have been breathing fine like this while asleep. Focus on breathing as deeply as you can and not letting panic overtake your thoughts.

6. Keep your mental state positive and calm. Focus on relaxing thoughts - can you imagine a beach or distant location in the sun? Some people find it helps to sing in their mind as this instantly raises your positivity.

Maintain these goals for the duration of the sleep paralysis. Sometimes you will find it wears off in a few seconds. Other times it may appear to get the better of you but stay strong and focus on those tiny movements. As soon as your brain receives adequate signals that you are awake, it will shut down the REM atonia, you will be able to move your whole body again, and the hallucinations will disappear.

Turning Sleep Paralysis into Lucid Dreams

If you have experienced sleep paralysis in the past then you are likely predisposed to experiencing it again in the future. But this is not something to fret about. Did you know that thousands of people use it as a stepping stone to having lucid dreams? Uniquely, this half-awake half-asleep state acts like a gateway to the world of conscious dream control.

Sleep paralysis forms a stepping stone in several techniques, such as Wake Induced Lucid Dreams and The-Out-of-Body Exit. Read my tutorials to make the most of sleep paralysis and turn it into an opportunity to become lucid.

Sleep Paralysis in Other Cultures

This is not a new condition. Sleep paralysis has existed in folklore from many different cultures for centuries - perhaps millennia. In Japan, they call it "kanashibar". In Newfoundland, it's known as "the old hag" who visits you in the night. In China, they know it as "ghost oppression". Even artists have depicted this ghoulish night-time disorder: see *The Nightmare*by John Henry Fuseli.

It's no surprise that native folklore shapes the nature of sleep paralysis hallucinations. In America, it was only after flying saucers were popularized that people reported vivid alien abduction experiences, where aliens paralyzed and probed them in their bed at night.

In Mexico, more than 90% of teenagers know the phrase "a dead body climbed on top of me" to describe the nightmare entity. And in African culture, it's known as "the devil riding your back" where demons have sex with people in their sleep.

This all tells us that sleep paralysis is a common human condition, and the hallucinations can be shaped and molded based on your expectations.

6.) Out of Body Experiences: Lucid Dream or Spirit Travel?

Out of body experiences (OBEs or OOBEs) involve the vivid sensation of moving outside your physical body and sometimes traveling far beyond it.

OBEs are most likely to occur when you are asleep, meditating or practicing wake-induced lucid dream exercises. Indeed, many dream explorers agree that out-of-body phenomena are extensions of the lucid dream experience.

Around 1 in 10 people have experienced an OBE at some time in their lives - and some people have them frequently. There are many ways to induce an OBE and we'll look at a practical technique for doing so at the end of this article.

The Link between OBEs and Lucid Dreams

Our scientific understanding of the OBE strongly suggests that it is a type of lucid dream. It's no coincidence that out-of-body induction techniques are virtually identical to Wake Induced Lucid Dreams. They are virtually the same phenomenon:

An OBE/WILD begins when you're lying down, ideally having recently woken from a sleep. The body then slips back into sleep paralysis (the protective mechanism which prevents us from acting out our dreams) and the body falls asleep. However, unlike in normal sleep, the mind (your conscious awareness) remains awake.

This can give you the unusual sensation of being "stuck" in your physical body, with the need to free yourself. In reality, you are already dreaming. However the sensation of sleep paralysis, plus the continuation of consciousness, tricks your body into dreaming that you are still lying in bed. Your bedroom may look exactly as normal - or there may be subtle differences, such as an extra window.

At this stage, with the conscious mind active while dreaming, we call it *lucid dreaming*. The experience can be highly tactile and vivid. Lucid dreamers will attest that it can feel incredibly real, and those who genuinely believe they are having an out-of-body experience will have a hard time admitting it's all "just a dream".

To complete the transition, you need to use your imagination to swing, float or roll out of your body, which still feels like lead thanks to the sleep paralysis. Other dream characters (often perceived as ghosts, spirits, aliens or even demons) may enter your bedroom and can either help or hinder your efforts. Their behavior generally depends on your own expectation and level of fear / happiness.

It is also possible to "teleport" out of your body and directly into a new dream scene / OBE location. Just visualizing the desired location can lead to instant OBE travel.

Often during the WILD technique, it is possible to bypass the whole experience of going out-of-body by visualizing the lucid dream scene before you start dreaming. With your eyes closed, focus your attention on your hypnagogia and let go of any bodily sensation whatsoever. Many people find this a much smoother transition.

Near Death Experiences

Out of body experiences can also be triggered under clinical conditions where brain function is compromised - such as stroke, epilepsy, head trauma and drug abuse. When this happens it is more often reported as a Near Death Experience (NDE).

Symptoms of a Near Death Experience are much the same as an OBE, but with added layers of expectation guiding the experience - namely the belief that you are dying. You will likely experience a feeling of detachment from the physical body, floating upwards, a tunnel of light, and feelings of either fear or total peace.

However, the term NDE is actually a misnomer: many conditions aren't actually life-threatening (especially drug-induced NDEs such as with the use of psychedelic drugs like DMT) and with improvements to cardiac resuscitation techniques, more NDEs are reported by survivors every year.

So what causes Near Death Experiences, if they're not some profound glimpse of the afterlife? Studies have actually measured increased activity in the temporal lobe of the brains of NDE subjects. When you stimulate this area with electromagnets, it can cause hallucinations of a supernatural variety, including sensing a divine presence or other spirit-like entities in the room.

While some people seem more susceptible to temporal lobe anomalies than others, these hallucinatory experiences are nonetheless very convincing.

Astral Projection

Astral projection (or astral travel) is an esoteric interpretation of the out of body experience that assumes the existence of a spirit.

The symptoms are much the same as an OBE: feelings of floating out of your body, meeting other entities, and experiencing the physical world from an ethereal perspective (i.e., being able to float through walls and teleport around the universe).

However, the expectation principle can cause the experience of astral projection to take on a highly spiritual form. Believers in the afterlife *expect* to see angels, deceased spirits and even gods - and so that is often what they do see while projecting.

They may travel to different "astral planes"; layers of ethereal realities shaped by energy and light. Yet one key similarity remains: in astral projection, out of body experiences and lucid dreams, your thoughts and feelings guide the experience.

So if you imagine a friend's house, you will likely zap there in an instant. If you imagine your body back in bed, you will quickly return to it. And if you *expect* to see an astral chord connecting you to your body, it will doubtless be there.

In my view, astral projection is just a spiritual interpretation of the OBE, and I have no reason to believe it is actually true.

How to Have an Out of Body Experience

As someone who dreams every night, you've already had thousands of "out of body experiences". You just didn't know it at the time.

Think about it: any time you are exploring a dream world (lucid or not) you are roaming free, completely separately from your physical body lying in bed. This is no word play. *An out of body experience is your mind, out-of-body, in an internally generated dream world.* (Note: this does not mean your dreams *literally* take you out of body at night.)

Now here is what separates an OBE from a typical dream:

1. You have a higher level of consciousness during the experience
2. You initiate the experience by exiting your perceived body

The first criteria means that to have an OBE, you must be fully conscious or lucid. This means that you have vivid self-awareness during the experience, and many or all of your senses are firing just as effectively in waking life. This is what makes it so real. In this form, any type of lucid dream can constitute an out of body experience.

The second criteria means being aware of leaving your body while it is lying in bed. Normally your dreams just launch off in a new environment. But this time you'll begin in your bedroom, in the exact same position as your physical body. In this form, only certain types of wake-induced lucid dreams constitute an out of body experience.

That's the theory out of the way - now let's do some practical work:

How to Have an OBE in 3 Steps

Step 1 - Relax Your Mind and Body

Lie down in a comfortable position. Make sure the room is quiet and there are no distractions. You must be able to shut off from the outside world and not be startled by anything - including voices, telephones and footsteps.

Take some deep breaths and clear your mind completely. Don't think about anything - allow your thoughts to pass by in their own time.

Begin to meditate, either on your own or using isochronic brainwave entrainment (such as the Out of Body Experience MP3 which I find produces many out-of-body phenomena). The goal is to clear and focus your mind while your body falls asleep.

Perform a systematic relaxation routine. Starting from your toes, tighten and then relax every muscle group in your body. Imagine them sinking into the bed or floating up and becoming weightless. Finish up by fully relaxing your face, jaw and neck where you hold most tension.

Within 5-10 minutes you should feel relaxed and dreamy, with greatly reduced awareness of your body. You may begin to feel floating limbs or that your arms are in different positions than they were previously. This is great progress!

Step 2 - Shift Your Awareness

When you have little bodily sensation left, shift your awareness away from your body and gaze into the black space in front of you. Visualize distant stars and planets if you like, or follow your natural hypnagogia (swirling lights and geometric patterns that hypnotize you to sleep). As you go deeper, be aware of the images arising in your mind's eye, beyond your field of vision.

This is known as "falling asleep consciously". You are tricking your body into thinking you have gone to sleep. Don't move a muscle - stay fully relaxed and still. (If you have an itch, you'll need to scratch it, but then quickly resume where you left off.)

At this stage you may feel the effects of sleep paralysis, as if there is a lead weight moving over your body. Let it come, knowing that you are now very close to an out of body experience. However, some people never feel this stage at all, because their awareness is already focused well beyond the physical body.

As your mind wanders further into the blackness, you may be startled by a loud vibrating or humming noise inside your head. This is just another phase in the out-of-body process. Think of this as the static noise on a radio between two frequencies. It is likely a communication from the brain asking if you are still awake, so go against your instinct and just ignore it. (Actually, the first few times this may be very difficult to ignore because it can be deafening! But you'll soon get used to it and realize nothing bad happens.)

Step 3 - Move Out of Body

The vibrations soon pass and once that happens, you will be set free into your dream world. You may find you already have an arm or leg free, are fully floating above your body in bed, or that you've rolled across the bed and fallen onto the floor!

Don't worry - your real body is lying in bed sleeping peacefully. This early movement can be very confusing but stay with it or you may wake up. If you find you are still "stuck" in your body, remember that you are now in a lucid dream world, where your thoughts become extremely powerful and control all your movement. Use one of the following methods to leave your "paralyzed" body:

- **Float out** - visualize your viewpoint has risen a few feet into the air
- **Swing out** - visualize a swing, forming longer arcs as you gain momentum
- **Sink out** - imagine your dream body slowly dropping through the bed
- **Roll out** - visualize yourself turning on your side and rolling over
- **Teleport out** - imagine another location and engage your senses

If you haven't already, you will naturally regain your vision when your awareness moves out of body. If things appear blurry - just ask for clarity. Say out loud to your dream "Clarity Now!" and look closely at the room in detail. You may even be able to validate the fact that you are dreaming by checking minor details in the room.

Meeting Entities during OBEs

As we now understand, the temporal lobe is more active during out of body experiences, and if you are prone to spiritual or religious beliefs then you are more likely to encounter a "presence" in your bedroom. Spirits, angels, the ghosts of loved ones and even demons may materialize to observe, help or hinder your quest.

Remember, though, they are merely dream characters. Their behavior is fueled by your expectation, so if you expect them to be malevolent, they likely will be. The best response is to accept their presence and welcome them into your dream. They are a part of your own subconscious mind. Embrace them, sing happy songs at them, laugh with them and ask for their help. They will gladly oblige.

7.) The Five Stages of Sleep

Each and every night, your brain passes through five stages of sleep. Passing through all these stages takes about 90-110 minutes and marks one full sleep cycle. So, if you sleep soundly for eight hours per night, you're getting five full sleep cycles.

Let's take a closer look at the five stages of sleep:

- **Stage 1** is a light sleep and you are easily woken. You begin to lose muscle tone, causing twitches and hypnic jerks (suddenly jumping awake from a doze). You have hypnagogic hallucinations, swirling light and color patterns which hypnotize your mind into a restful sleep. Stage 1 also marks the loss of self-awareness and most sensory attachment to the physical world. Your brainwave frequencies descend from ALPHA through THETA state (4-7 Hz).

- **Stage 2** is marked by a loss of nearly all muscle tone (sleep paralysis or REM atonia) so your physical body can't act out your forthcoming dreams. Although your brainwaves have slowed further, they do show brief bursts of higher brainwave activity called sleep spindles in the lower BETA range at 12-16 Hz. You spend around half of all your sleep in Stage 2; a light dreamless sleep.

- **Stage 3** is the beginning of a deep sleep, also known as Slow Wave Sleep. It is harder to rouse someone from a deep sleep, but if you are woken you will feel especially dopey and confused for a couple of minutes. Brainwaves have descended to the DELTA range of 0.5-4 Hz, the slowest frequency you'll ever experience. Once again this is another dreamless stage of sleep, however it is also the most likely time for sleepwalking to occur.

- **Stage 4** is the deepest kind of Slow Wave Sleep. This stage replenishes your energy both physically and mentally, and without enough deep sleep (such as when sleeping on a long-haul flight) you won't feel refreshed in the morning. Your brainwaves are now exclusively in the DELTA range.

- **REM Sleep** marks the onset of dreaming. After submerging itself through the deeper stages of sleep, brainwave activity returns to the THETA range (4-8 Hz) through BETA (12-38 Hz) and Rapid Eye Movement denotes

dreaming. If you are woken from REM sleep you'll dive back into this stage when you next return to sleep. REM sleep is important to healthy brain functioning for many reasons, including the creation of long-term memories. This is also where lucid dreaming occurs, signified by even greater brainwave frequencies sometimes as high as the GAMMA range of 38-90 Hz, marking a highly active brain state.

When is The Best Time for Lucid Dreaming?

Your longest and most memorable lucid dreams will usually occur in the fourth and fifth sleep cycles (after about six hours of sleep).

REM sleep occurring at the end of each sleep cycle. This is your dream time - which finishes off each sleep cycle.

If you don't wake up to an alarm, you'll find you often wake directly from a dream, which makes it much easier to remember. When this happens, don't move and just allow yourself to gently re-enter the dream, while thinking "I'm dreaming".

It's essential for lucid dreamers to get sufficient shuteye and not miss out on REM sleep by cutting sleep short. Indeed, the more chances you have to sleep in, the better. Sleeping-in allows extended REM time in the morning, more vivid dreams, and more chances to become lucid.

How Much Sleep Does The Average Person Need?

When you're deciding how many hours to sleep each night, also consider how many sleep cycles that will give you. For instance, a 7-hour sleep will wake you up in the middle of your fifth sleep cycle (assuming each cycle takes 90 minutes). This cuts you short and prevents your fifth REM phase. It's much healthier to wake up *after* the cycle is complete and in a light Stage 1 sleep of your next cycle.

Do you repeatedly wake up "on the wrong side of the bed" each morning? It's likely your alarm clock is interrupting your final sleep cycle at a crucial point. If you can, allow yourself to wake up naturally each morning. Otherwise, go to bed earlier and give yourself the extra minutes needed to complete the cycle.

So, how many sleep cycles should you aim for each night? Four? Five? Six? It seems that the amount of sleep required differs from person to person, however as a rough guide experts have come up with the following chart based on age:

Age / Condition	Hours	Sleep Cycles
Newborn baby	Up to 18	12
1-12 months	14-18	9-12
1-3 years	12-15	8-10
3-5 years	11-13	7-8
5-12 years	9-11	6-7
Adolescents	9-10	6
Adults	7-8	4-5
Pregnant women	8+	5+

How Long Do Dreams Last?

We can measure the length of dream time using an EEG machine which reads brainwave activity. Dreams are directly correlated to REM sleep - to the extent that your eyes can move and track in the same direction you are looking in the dream.

The brainwave readings tell us that REM sleep *at the end of the first sleep cycle* lasts only a few minutes. Much of the first cycle is dedicated to non-REM sleep, driven by the need for physical rest. So, these early dreams are often fleeting. You are unlikely to remember them and they're unlikely to yield lucid dreams.

As you sleep on through the night, your REM phases grow longer in each sleep cycle. By morning, *your fourth or fifth sleep cycle* (ending when you wake up for the day) may allow for 45-60 minutes of uninterrupted REM sleep. It's perfect for lucid dreaming.

Like regular dreams, lucid dreams can last anywhere from a few seconds up to an hour (and possibly even more). A typical lucid dream lasts 10-20 minutes.

Most beginners find their lucid dream collapses within a few seconds because the emotions of becoming lucid are so overwhelming. However with a few simple dream stabilization methods, you can massively prolong your lucid dreams.

Sleeping Improving Tips

Sleep Tip #1 - Give Yourself Enough Time to Sleep

Everyone needs a different amount of sleep to function normally - on average this is about 7.5 to 8.5 hours per night. If you have to press the snooze button in the morning, or drag yourself out of bed feeling exhausted, then you're probably not getting enough shuteye and are suffering from sleep deprivation. Give yourself a fair chance of getting sufficient sleep by going to bed earlier, preferably before midnight.

Sleep Tip #2 - Go to Bed at the Same Time Each Night

To sleep better, aim to go to bed at roughly the same time during weekdays and weekends so your bodily rhythms can get into a routine. To help this process, put up curtains that allow some sunlight through, so the sun naturally wakes you up at the same time each morning and keeps your Circadian Rhythms in time.

Sleep Tip #3 - Avoid Stimulants at Night

The main culprits are coffee, tea, chocolate and soda drinks - these all contain caffeine which will keep your body and mind alert for hours. This will also prevent you from getting deep non-REM sleep. Be conscious of your caffeine intake and how it causes any sleep deprivation and you will soon understand how to sleep better naturally.

Sleep Tip #4 - Avoid Bright Light before Bed

It is totally unnatural for us to be immersed in bright light before attempting to go to sleep for the night. This tricks our brain into thinking its daytime and interferes with our Circadian Rhythms. So if you must read before bed, use a low wattage bulb (15 watts should do the trick) or install a dimmer switch. Make it easy on the eyes.

Sleep Tip #5 - Avoid Heavy Meals before Bed

A heavy meal forces your body to crank up the digestive system while you actually want to be getting your body nice and relaxed for better sleep. What's more, if you lie down on a full stomach, you're more likely to induce acid reflux which can disturb your sleep and even trigger Night Terrors and nightmares.

Sleep Tip #6 - Set a Bedtime Routine

A regular routine tells your mind and body to start winding down for the night. Make it a relaxing one - don't sit up on the computer until your brain is frazzled and you want to pass out. Some people like to have a light snack about an hour before bed so as not to sleep on an empty stomach. Also try a cup of herbal tea to relax jittery nerves. Always empty your bladder before bed so it doesn't wake you up during the night and disturb you.

Sleep Tip #7 - Keep Your Bedroom Cool

We all have an optimum room temperature for better sleep, so make sure yours isn't too hot or too cold. Wear enough layers to bed in the winter and switch your thick duvet to a light sheet in the summer. It's better to be slightly on the cooler side so you can wrap up warmer if you need to.

Sleep Tip #8 - Don't Lay Awake for More Than 30 Minutes

If you're tossing and turning in bed, unable to get to sleep for whatever reason, don't torture yourself for more than 30 minutes. Get up and go do something to occupy your mind. You'll eventually feel sleepy enough to fall back into bed.

Sleep Tip #9 - Don't Stress If You Can't Sleep

Don't lay in bed worrying about the fact that you can't get any sleep. It's likely that your mind is already buzzing with thoughts, so stressing about how to sleep better will make things worse. Try listening to some isochoric tones to silence your mind chatter and create a relaxing meditation. After that, visualize a lucid dream intention.

Sleep Tip #10 - Ask About Unusual Sleep Behaviors

Ask your partner if you ever snore, temporarily stop breathing, talk, shout, or move about a lot during sleep. It could be that you have a sleep disorder (ranging from sleep deprivation, to sleep apnea, to REM sleep disorder) that is preventing you from enjoying good quality sleep. See a doctor and you may discover how to sleep better for good.

8.) The Hypnagogic State: Hypnagogia & Lucid Dreams

The **hypnagogic state** is a peculiar sensory experience that marks the onset of sleep. Also known as *hypnagogia*, it can include a mesmerizing array of visions, sounds, bodily sensations and insights as you sail through the borderland state.

Most people will be familiar with the geometric imagery of hypnagogia as they fall asleep at night, or simply remain quietly aware during meditation. This can evolve into the sight of familiar faces, landscapes, voices and even music.

As the increasingly complex patterns flow across your field of vision, you feel drawn into the hypnotic hypnagogic state which, with focus, can be manipulated at will. What many people don't realize (because they fall asleep) is that imagery can lead directly to the dream state and, for our purposes, lucid dreams.

What is The Hypnagogic State?

The terms *hypnagogic* (sleep onset) and *hypnopompic* (awakening) were created in the 1800s. *Hypnos* is Greek for sleep; while *agogeus* means guide. It is so named because it is most intense as you switch between phases of sleep and wakefulness.

The hypnagogic state can summon an array of senses, and is by no means limited to visuals. Auditory hypnagogia range from household noises like phones ringing, to music, to voices calling your name, to the loud buzzing noise associated with the onset of an Out of Body Experience. What's more, physical hypnagogia can cause you to feel as if you are floating outside of your body.

While some people consider hypnagogia to be meaningless activity of the brain - a way of clearing out unwanted junk - others believe it has more value. Just like lucid dreams, hypnagogia can be consciously guided and interpreted as it happens, forging a basic two-way communication with the unconscious mind. Therefore, on one level hypnagogia is a way of leading us into the dream-state.

Scientists have linked the hypnagogic state with NREM sleep, pre-sleep alpha waves, REM sleep and relaxed wakefulness. There is a theory that regular meditation can enable you to develop a skill to freeze the hypnagogic process at later and later stages. And from personal experience, hypnagogia can be extremely helpful in deepening the meditative state required for wake-induced lucidity.

1. HYPNAGOGIC EXERCISE #1

Although it is most commonly associated with sleep, you can observe some mild hypnagogia right now, even though you are mentally alert and awake. Close your eyes and cup your palms over your eye sockets (without actually touching your eyeballs). Focus on the middle distance. What do you see?

At first there may be an afterimage from the glare of the computer screen, but then you should see some faint visuals in the darkness like holographic wallpaper lining your eyelids. They will typically appear as static, geometric patterns which intensify a little when you direct your focus towards them.

Hypnagogia and Lucid Dreams

Observing and interacting with the hypnagogic state as you drift to sleep is one way of entering a lucid dream on demand. The most powerful technique is known as a Wake Induced Lucid Dream, which in some circles is known as the Hypnagogic Induction Technique because hypnagogia plays such an important role.

2. HYPNAGOGIC EXERCISE #2

To begin, lay quietly in a darkened room as if you are going to sleep. (An even better starting point is any time you wake up in the night, already relaxed.) Allow your eyes to close naturally and observe the darkness. The goal is to relax deeply and convince your brain that you are trying to go to sleep. The challenge, however, is to quiescence your mind *just enough* (no mind chatter) while holding onto a thin strand of awareness.

For me, focused hypnagogia often begins with amorphous blobs of color slowly moving through my field of vision. Then they shape up into more interesting patterns. I then visualize new forms for my hypnagogia to take - by "willing" the visuals to form shapes with increasing complexity. With practice, you will learn how to evolve these moving shapes into people and places, which helps dictate the nature of your upcoming lucid dream. At some point, your dreaming mind will take over, introducing new imagery from beyond your field of vision. I'd like this to recalling a memory. The sensation and emotions and visual recall come to mind, from somewhere beyond the projected imagery.

And so the lucid dream begins...

If you remained aware, you will find yourself in a lucid dream. To be a true WILD, there is no lapse in consciousness. (You may lose awareness for a few moments, then remember you are dreaming. This is more aligned with a Dream Initiated Lucid Dream or DILD.)

Depending on your state of mind when the hypnagogic state began, it can take as little as a few seconds to turn the visuals into a lucid dream. Or it can take 20-30 minutes. After this length of time, it is a judgment call whether to keep going. If you are starting to feel restless, then it's time to stop. If you feel dreamy and sleepy, by all means keep going.

The hypnagogic-WILD method is a compelling way to explore the realm between consciousness and sleep. You will discover deep relaxation, trippy visuals, and clarity of thought, stress-relief and new insights.

Some people find it difficult to master at first. Usually the hardest part is making the transition from simply observing the complex hypnagogia to interacting with the dream. However, it is worth practicing because this also serves as a powerful form of meditation which in itself aids lucid dreaming on many levels.

9.) Exploring your Conscious Hypnagogia

Hypnagogia is the collective term for the hallucinations (sights, sounds and other sensations) we experience during the transition between wakefulness and sleep. It occurs at the threshold of consciousness, and is responsible for the onset of lucid dreams, hallucinations, out of body experiences and sleep paralysis. You can deliberately induce hypnagogic hallucinations as you fall asleep in order to have a Wake Induced Lucid Dream or WILD.

What is Hypnagogia Like?

Like dreams, hypnagogic hallucinations can be quite random in nature. Here are some of the most common types you will probably have experienced yourself at some time:

1. Sights
The beginnings of visual hallucinations occur as *phosphenes* - seemingly random speckles, lines or geometric patterns that may float around or remain still behind your closed eyelids. When deeply immersed, you can control these patterns at will. First, just focus on changing the direction of the lines. Then ask for specific shapes and movements. After that it's not difficult to have the phosphenes form a familiar face or animal. By learning to interact with your visual hypnagogia, you should find it easier to transition the visuals into whole imagined scenes which then become lucid dreams.

2. Sounds
Occasionally you will experience an auditory hallucinations. The intensity can vary greatly, from faint impressions to loud buzzing noises frequently reported at the onset of an OBE. Auditory hypnagogia range from hearing someone call your name, to hearing the phone ring or snippets of speech appearing to come from very nearby.

I find this kind of hallucination is more transitory and I will only hear a brief few words or have a *memory* of hearing something just a moment ago. Unlike the visual stuff, the sounds can't really be controlled (in my experience) simply because they're so fleeting. However it may be worth experimenting if you hear drawn out sounds such as music to see if it can be controlled.

3. The Tetris Effect
This is a truly bizarre feature of hypnagogia, where you feel the sensation of acting out a repetitive activity from the day before.

When I worked on a supermarket checkout, I used to have the frustrating sensation that I was scanning food items over and over in my hypnagogic state. Similarly, waiters and waitresses report having "Server Dreams" where they restlessly wait tables as they fall asleep. Chess players claim to see the checkered black-and-white chess board, and boaties have the sensation of being at sea when they go to bed on solid ground.

Remember, though, this is not a dream state; the brain is using a variety of sensory memories to hypnotize you into a sleep state, where the real dreams can begin.

4. Sleep Paralysis
Although unusual, both lucid dreamers and regular dreamers can experience sleep paralysis at any time. It involves the sensation of being paralyzed (though really we are all paralyzed as we sleep at night to prevent us acting out our dreams) and this natural bodily process is called *REM atonia*. In this instance however, you are aware of the paralysis and it can be quite scary.

The phenomenon usually passes in a few minutes as you return to full wakefulness or deepen the sensation and step

your mind into a lucid dream. Sleep paralysis can be accompanied by loud humming, roaring and buzzing noises (just like OBEs) and in severe cases includes visual hallucinations.

5. Other Sensations

The effects of hypnagogia don't end there. Some people report fleeting sensations of taste, smell, heat and other tactile feelings as they fall asleep. It's also normal to have changes in perceived body size, or floating limbs; sometimes as I fall asleep or meditate I feel as though my arms are in a totally different positions to reality. And we have all experienced the Hypnic Jerk - a sudden jolt back to reality from the verge of sleep, usually accompanied by a vision of tripping or falling (*Inception* called this The Kick).

Here may also be a form of synesthesia at play during the hypnagogic state. Hearing a real-life sound may result in seeing a flash of white light due to some funny cross-wiring in the brain. It's actually thought that we all have some degree of synesthesia in waking life; while most of us may have a spatial recognition of the days of the week in our mind's eye, extreme synesthesiasts see numbers as colors, or taste different foods when they hear certain words.

Why Observe My Hypnagogia?

If you're reading this page and wondering what the heck I'm on about, then you must fall asleep before the onset of your hypnagogia. This means you don't consciously observe it and so you won't have any memory of it at all.

Don't worry. Some nights, I go straight to sleep without giving it a second thought and I still have spontaneous lucid dreams later on the same night. However, it can be helpful to induce conscious hypnagogia for two reasons:

1. **Meditation.** Learning to meditate is a key part of lucid dreaming. It trains your brain to stay conscious and focused even when your body is deeply relaxed, and this is a great primer for lucidity. Besides developing your skills in altered states of awareness, it also helps you to visualize dream scenes from a waking state. If you currently have lucid dreams but don't meditate, you're missing out. You could supercharge the number of lucid dreams you have simply by meditating when you go to sleep at night and/or wake up in the early morning.

2. **Wake Induced Lucid Dreams and OBEs.** One step beyond this is to induce a lucid dream from a meditative state. This is essentially what a Wake Induced Lucid Dream is - also known as an out of body experience - although I'll leave the interpretation of such events up to you. The WILD/OBE technique begins with the conscious observation of your hypnagogic imagery, and once you have mastered this calm observation of your own inner stream of consciousness, you will find it easier and easier to have WILDs and OBEs on demand.

How to Induce Conscious Hypnagogia

First, go to bed at your usual time and relax.

This will bring on the hypnagogic state, provided you don't fall asleep first. To ensure your brain stays consciously alert, try focusing your awareness as you breathe in, and then relaxing your body further as you breathe out. Your body really must be relaxed, so actively relieve all tension by squeezing and then releasing all muscle groups.

If you feel the urge to roll over, good! This is your brain sending a signal to your body: are you asleep yet? Resist that urge and stay relaxed, and you should begin to experience some serious hypnagogia. Do not worry about sleep paralysis. Most of the time I don't feel it because my awareness is directed well away from my body. If you do feel the paralysis rolling up your body, just go with it deeper, and start to visualize your next lucid dream. You are so close to attaining full lucidity inside the dream world!

If you lay still for about 15 minutes and still can't see any blobs of color or twinkling lights, then your brain is probably too active and alert to sleep. Listen to some brainwave entrainment to achieve an alpha and then theta state of awareness and you will be guaranteed to experience some hypnagogic magic. I experience visual and sensory effects every time I listen to my entrainment MP3 and it leads me into a deep meditation, from which point I am ready to launch my lucid dreams and OBEs at will.

10.) Co-Dreaming

Co-Dreaming takes place when two different dreamers share the same dream, when both are on the same reality-plane or can communicate with each other during a dream. This may sound like science-fiction to most of you, but I and other lucid dreamers really have experienced it many times. It is like telepathy but more tangible. Each dreamer keeps their own objective viewpoint. Whether what you had was a co-dream or not can be determined the next day when comparing your data to that of your co-dreamer. If you both had that dream and saw each other in that dream, you have had a Co-Dream. Thus can also happen with groups and is then called group-dream.

Co-Dreams do not only occur when both people are lucid but lucid dreams make for the best co-dreams and are usually the only ones you can remember. Sometimes you know that you are dreaming while the other person does not know or vice-versa. But sometimes you can then still verify the co-dream after waking up. The lucid dreamer tells their friend who then recalls having dreamed that. The non-lucid dream will have a more vague memory of it but as you talk about what happened in the dream, that memory may become clearer. Sometimes you will dream of the other person without it having been a co-dream. You can tell it was a co-dream when both of you remember certain events of the dream in detail. If I suspect I had a lucid dream with someone I usually don't go up to them and say "We shared a dream last night!" but instead ask "What did you dream last night?" While they describe their dream, I fill in the details until they ask: "How do you know what I dreamed?" The dream then becomes a verified co-dream.

To experience co-dreaming it can be helpful to have friends that are also interested in lucid dreaming. In a hyper-lucid state it is also possible to pick up friends and make them lucid within their dream-world. The most amazing thing that has happened to me is that I got to know someone on dreamscape which I then later met in waking life! This was as if the dream connection was a preparatory experience for our encounter in waking life. Sometimes we do share dreams with people we do not know in daily life and sometimes we share them with people we only know peripherally. I recall actually having an affair with someone who, in waking life, meant nothing to me. She was an employee of one of my students I said "hi" too every few weeks, nothing more. But when our eyes met there was that strange recognition there that there is more going on than meets the eye. A few years ago I had a Co-Dream where the person announced that we would get to know each other in 20 years. That would be a mixture of Co-Dream and Pre-Cognitive Dream. Another one of these was when I met one of my Course-Students weeks before the course. In my dream he said "We will met again". I thought he was referring to the dream. But we met again in waking life as one of my students, where he told me: "I dreamed of your course and meeting you a few weeks ago" (He was apparently not aware that we had had a Co-Dream).

Co-Dreams take place on Levels 6 and 7 of the dream-scale. Two or more people are in the same dream environment. One's own control over the dreamscape seems to be reduced since the Co-Dreamers also have some influence over the scenario. I once tried to change a dune without consent of the other dreamers. The sandy dune remained unchanged. At another time I got the consent to change a street sign and after my Co-Dreamer agreed, I could change it. My impression is that the dreamscape is a shared scenario and shared responsibility in which I can only change it if I get the others consent or if I am more lucid than the other.

A realization I had is that, seen from a higher viewpoint, we always experience Co-Dreams on some level. My normal self is dreaming his normal dream while another part of myself is Co-Dreaming. According to this view all levels of dreaming are taking place, it simply depends which level my awareness is linked to. The levels of awareness begin with Not-I (subconscious) then to I (conscious) then We (Group Consciousness) and finally Planetary Consciousness (Mass-Consciousness) and then the rest of the Universe (Cosmic Consciousness) and Infinity (Ultimate Being). Throughout this whole process of advancement each level stays intact. That means, I can still experience individual "I" Consciousness while at the same time experiencing Universal Consciousness (me-as-Universe). This may seem like a contradiction to earthly understanding but I've experienced the simultaneity in hyper lucid dreaming.

Meeting friends in dreams sometimes reveals aspects that may seem unpleasant. Friends who are not lucid while you visit them can behave or look strange. Some time ago I arranged to Co-Dream with a friend of mine. We focused on our meeting while falling asleep. As I met him in dream he did not react to me. He was in a catatonic state, as if under the influence of Drugs or Hypnosis. His eyes and head were rolling uncontrollably and he babbled nonsense as if drunk. I grabbed hold of him and said "Hey. You are dreaming." He reacted a little. We walked around a little together. I felt a lot of compassion for him seeming to be stuck in unawareness. On our walk we met an elderly woman that addressed my friend trying to sell him something. My friend was still acting absent and strange. On the next day it turned out he did remember some parts of the dream, even though he was not lucid. He described the old lady just like I had also seen her (white curly hair, blue dress, brown suitcase), but he also perceived things that I did not experience. He said the old lady tried to attack him and how they got into a wrestle. This is how I learned that strong emotions can distort your experience so much that you experience a different reality than others. He had experienced a nightmare while I was only experiencing a slightly pushy old lady. Just like in waking life! Hence, the more lucid both are, the more probable it is that they will both experience a similar reality (or even have a shared dream).

11.) The Meaning behind Dreams: Find Insights with Dream Interpretation

Dreams are like letters from the unconscious brain. If only they were written in the same language that we use in waking reality!

Alas, they are disguised through conceptual thinking, which is how the subconscious mind works. But we can decode this information with ***dream analysis.***

How to Begin your Dream Interpretation

To begin your dream analysis, start a **dream journal**, for three reasons:

1. Improve your Dream Recall - so that in time you can remember up to five dreams every night (one for each REM sleep cycle). A powerful technique for remembering dreams is to set your alarm clock to wake you after each REM cycle has finished: first after 3 hours, then every 90 minutes thereafter. This can be disruptive to your sleep, but it is worth trying one night - you will be bowled over by the number of dreams you can recall!

2. Identify Dream Symbols - a dream journal allows you to track recurring dream symbols and translate the underlying meaning behind dreams. For instance, you may repeatedly dream about falling, but this only becomes clear when you count the number of times it appears in your dream journal. That's because your subconscious mind is trying to send you a message in conceptual form.

3. Increase Dream Meaning - writing and talking about your dreams places greater importance on them in your subconscious mind. The power of the subconscious is truly amazing, and if you give it a task (to remember more dreams) it will comply. Suddenly you will be able to boost your dream recall and have greater opportunities to translate the meaning behind dreams. You may also realize that your dreams become more meaningful for as you open up a new communication channel with the subconscious mind.

How to Translate Subconscious Dreams

The essence of dream interpretation is not to take things literally. Dreaming about death does not mean you are going to die. Instead it may represent the end of an era or part of your life.

Dream analysis is symbolic -***because that's how the subconscious mind works.***

The human brain thinks and learns in neural patterns. If you fall off your bike and cut your knee, you will associate your bike with pain. Your subconscious then creates a "rule" to avoid falling off a bike in future. This is a neural pathway; a link between neurons in your brain. ***It is learned through experience.***

Neural pathways become more complex over the years. They apply to every kind of experience in life. Your subconscious mind uses these associations in dreams.

How to Interpret Dream Symbols

You have a unique understanding of the world around you. As you grew up, your subconscious learned about friendship, love, loneliness and betrayal. It made up rules about every human emotion and how you should feel about life. These "rules" are reflected in your dreams each night.

But equally, we have all grown up in the same culture, the same era, and we are all human. So it's no coincidence that we all make the same conclusions about life, subconsciously. That's where a dream dictionary comes in extremely useful.

Dreams are like personal letters from the subconscious mind. If only they were written in the same language we use in waking reality!

Fortunately, we have the ability to study our dreams and interpret the common dream symbols they contain. Although there is no hard and fast rule book of universal definitions, the following dream meanings offer a sound starting point for most people.

It's worth stating that dreams are not psychic premonitions of the future. They are subtle, subconscious thought patterns expressing information and emotions we aren't aware of while awake. All dream symbols are programmed by your own subconscious self (even in lucid dreams, where the conscious mind is allowed to play a role).

Recognizing common dream symbols is a good way to start lucid dreaming. For instance, if you repeatedly dream of cars, running away, or flying, you can attach each of these triggers to a reality check. Anytime you experience or think of the stimulus during the waking day, do a reality check. You'll soon repeat the check during your dreams when you encounter these symbols and become lucid.

How to Identify Dream Symbols

To identify common dream symbols in your own dreams, keep a dream journal. Write in the present tense as if you're actually re-experiencing the dream, and underline any unusual or poignant aspects (e.g., "the frog is sad because he knows a drought is coming").

Next, refer any emotional or recurring dream symbols to a dream dictionary or the list below. Remember - don't take these definitions as read, because they do depend on the context of your dream, your personal psychological attachments to the symbols, and your current life circumstances. Just let this be a starting point for fuller personal analysis...

29 Common Dream Symbols

1. Animals often represent the part of your psyche that feels connected to nature and survival. Being chased by a predator suggest you're holding back repressed emotions like fear or aggression.
2. Babies can symbolize a literal desire to produce offspring, or your own vulnerability or need to feel loved. They can also signify a new start.
3. Being chased is one of the most common dream symbols in all cultures. It means you are feeling threatened, so reflect on who is chasing you (they may also be symbolic) and why they are a possible threat in real life.
4. Clothes make a statement about how we want other people to perceive us. If you dream symbol is shabby clothing, you may feel unattractive or worn out. Changing what you wear may reflect a lifestyle change.
5. Crosses are interpreted subjectively depending on your religious beliefs. Some see it as symbolizing balance, death, or an end to a particular phase of life. The specific circumstances will help define these dream symbols.
6. Exams can signify self-evaluation, with the content of the exam reflecting the part of your personality or life under inspection.
7. Death of a friend or loved one represents change (endings and new beginnings) and is not a paranormal prediction of any kind. If you are recently bereaved, it may be an attempt to come to terms with the event.
8. Falling is a common dream symbol that relates to our anxieties about letting go, losing control over a situation, or somehow failing after a success.
9. Faulty machinery in dreams is often caused by your language centers being shut down while asleep, making it difficult to dial a phone, read the time, or search the internet. It can also represent performance anxiety in life.
10. Food is said to symbolize knowledge, because it nourishes the body just as information nourishes the brain. Food for thought?
11. Demons are sneaky evil entities which signify repressed emotions. You may secretly feel the need to change your own behaviors for the better.
12. Hair has significant ties with sexuality, according to Freud. Abundant hair may symbolize virility, while cutting hair off in a dream shows a loss of libido. Hair loss may also express a literal fear of going bald or becoming unattractive.
13. Hands are always present in dreams but when they are tied up it may represent feelings of futility. Washing your hands may express guilt. Looking closely at your hands in a dream is a good way to become lucid.
14. Houses can host many common dream symbols, but the building as a whole represents your inner psyche. Each room or floor can symbolize different emotions, memories and interpretations of meaningful events.
15. Killing in your dreams does not make you a closet murderer; it represents your desire to "kill" part of your own personality. It can also symbolize hostility towards a particular person and the desire to see them suffer.
16. Marriage *may be a literal desire to wed or a merging of the feminine and masculine parts of your psyche.*
17. Missing a flight *or any other kind of transport is another popular dream, showing your frustration over possibly missing out on important opportunities in life. It's most common when you're struggling to make a big decision.*
18. Money *can symbolize* ***self-worth****. If you dream of exchanging money, it may show that you're anticipating some changes in your life.*
19. Mountains are obstacles, so to dream of successfully climbing a mountain can reveal a true feeling of achievement. Viewing a landscape from atop a mountain can symbolize a life under review without conscious prejudice.
20. Nudity is one of the most common dream symbols, revealing your true self to others. You may feel vulnerable and exposed to others. Showing off your nudity may suggest sexual urges or a desire for recognition.
21. People (other dream characters) are reflections of your own psyche, and may demonstrate specific aspects of your own personality.
22. Radios and TVs can symbolize communication channels between the conscious and subconscious minds. When lucid, ask them a question...

23. Roads, aside from being literal manifestations, convey your direction in life. This may be time to question your current "life path".
24. Schools are common dream symbols in children and teenagers but what about dreaming of school in adulthood? It may display a need to know and understand yourself, fueled by life's own lessons.
25. Sex dreams can symbolize intimacy and a literal desire for sex. Or they may demonstrate the unification of unconscious emotions with conscious recognition, showing a new awareness and personal growth.
26. Teeth are common dream symbols. Dreaming of losing your teeth may show a hidden fear of getting old and being unattractive to the opposite sex.
27. Being trapped (physically) is a common nightmare theme, reflecting your real life inability to escape or make the right choice.
28. Vehicles may reflect how much control you feel you have over your life - for instance is the car out of control, or is someone else driving you?
29. Water comes in many forms and can symbolize the subconscious mind. Calm pools of water reflect inner peace while a choppy ocean can suggest unease.